

From The Shadows by Rikudemylx

Category: Teen Wolf (TV)

Genre: And more tags, F/M, I don't know why I love Russian Isaac, Isaac and his son are Russian, Isaac is Bi, M/M, Papa Isaac, Really Dark Stalker, Single Father, Stalker, Will probably include more characters, human AU, literally poor, poor isaac

Language: English

Characters: Allison Argent, Derek Hale, Isaac Lahey, Jackson Whittemore, Jordan Parrish, Lydia Martin, Melissa McCall, OMC, Scott McCall, Sheriff Stilinski, Stiles Stilinski

Relationships: Allison Argent/Scott McCall, Derek Hale/Stiles Stilinski, Isaac Lahey/Jordan Parrish, Isaacc Lahey/OFC(in the past), Lydia Martin/Jackson Whittemore, Melissa McCall/Sheriff Stilinski

Status: Completed

Published: 2015-03-21

Updated: 2016-01-29

Packaged: 2016-06-30 20:09:37

Rating: Explicit

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings, Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Rape/Non-Con

Chapters: 76

Words: 165,317

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Isaac hit rock bottom probably a few months prior, but he couldn't bring himself to admit it. It took a lot to admit to himself that he needed help and that's when he finally reached out and his best friend from growing up, Stiles, offered to let Isaac live with him and his husband to get back on his feet. Isaac scraped up the last of his dignity, his few belongings, and his seven year-old son to head to California. When he gets there, he thinks that maybe life is getting better. Until, it's not. Follow Isaac as he tries to find out who his ever creepier 'secret admirer' is, tries to provide a better life for his son, and maybe find some light at the end of his tunnel.

1. Going Home

Author's Note:

MTV owns probably everything. (Read the tags, please.) This fic has Russian in it, and I tried to get it as accurate as possible and have a response in English so you can guess what is said. Whenever this is not possible, I will include a translation at the bottom.

Isaac

Isaac couldn't help but check his rearview mirror every few minutes. It wasn't as though he was fleeing from anything particularly nasty, other than his massive debt, but there was still a feeling of foreboding as he watched the sign welcoming travelers to Chicago melt away into the background. The cough that rumbled his chest uncomfortably was a unique 'fuck off and die' to the city.

Isaac had finally capitulated. It had taken a damned long time, though, his personal pride withstanding as frozen dinners became mac and cheese, which devolved even more into ramen for him and his son.

In the end, it was really for Sergei that Isaac had crumbled. He had no doubt that if he wasn't the single father of a seven year-old that he might have endured his economic turbulence until he was found under a bridge in Chicago, starved to death.

Isaac had no such freedoms, though. Sergei deserved better than the life that Isaac was driving away from. The tiny, filthy, vermin ridden apartment was no place for one such as his son, watching the other children play with even the cheapest toys while having nothing for himself, and the absolute worst part, smiling and laughing, and supporting Isaac throughout the whole infernal mess.

Sergei never complained. He never whined when Isaac couldn't buy him Lucky Charms (because even if Isaac spent the last of his pennies to buy them, he wouldn't have been able to afford the milk), he never pouted for more than a few moments when his Christmas gift was the fact that they'd had hot water for more than two months, he never cried or threw a fit because he only had four outfits, and he accepted without question the strange and odd-smelling elderly neighbor

Gladys who sometimes looked after him when Isaac was at work.

If there was one blessing...one ray of sunshine in the maelstrom that was their lives, it was the bond that they shared. Sergei and Isaac were two souls alone in the face of the world and its shitty circumstances. Together, they defied fate and odds as month after month, they survived.

Isaac's eyes slid once again to the rearview mirror, though this time it was to check on Sergei, who was sleeping in the backseat, his long, black hair falling into his face, obscuring it from view. Isaac never stopped being amazed at how much Sergei looking like his mother.

Natasha had been a mistake, and considering that Isaac's life had been a series of terrible catastrophes from the moment that he had decided to leave Beacon Hills for Chicago, that was saying something.

It wasn't as though Isaac regretted Sergei, who was the result of a one night stand in Isaac's quest to experiment with his sexual orientation, because he didn't. He loved his son more than anything. Rather, he regretted that it had tangled his life with Natasha.

Natasha had dug her claws into Isaac, refusing to allow him a life of his own once it was discovered that she was pregnant. Considering the circumstances around the conception (and Natasha's less than virtuous nature), Isaac had demanded a paternity test, but it had done nothing but confirm his worse fears. Stuck in his first semester of college, aiming for a degree in philosophy that would end up being an absolute waste of time, Isaac's life had become hell as Natasha controlled every moment of it.

On the surviving side of her death by childbirth, Isaac could see her fears from a more rational point of view, but he still despised the woman, even if he respected her memory...if only for Sergei's sake. Natasha had been skeptical of Americans and their cavalier attitudes towards children, or rather, what she perceived to be a cavalier attitude. Isaac wasn't one to shirk his responsibility, but even if he had been, Natasha wouldn't have allowed it.

In the end, Isaac had moved in with her, if only to make her stop following him everywhere he went to ensure that he would be there for their son.

Isaac never really accepted her overbearing attitude, especially when it began to

interfere with his schoolwork and personal life. He ignored her plans and wishes for their son, watched the scans with a disinterested stare.

No, Isaac hadn't fully bonded on Sergei until he was born. Named by Natasha with her dying breath, Isaac realized in that moment what isolation felt like. True isolation was not a baby momma, wanting to ensure that her child was looked after, it wasn't spending every penny of Isaac's scholarship money on vitamins and hospital bills...No, isolation was realizing that the person you loved most in the world had to rely on you and only you in order to survive in the world. It was a thing that no one could understand unless they experienced it as Isaac had.

Isaac learned to be a master of time management; Working a job in between writing a paper and changing diapers, burping, and feeding Sergei had been a trial, one that he felt he had passed with flying colors...Maybe with a C

It was almost a drug, though. Despite the vomit, the sleepless nights, the shit (literally and figuratively), working two jobs...all of it was worth it when Isaac locked eyes on his son's sleeping form. He had made it far, farther than many other could have done, and that was something to be proud of...

Until that wasn't enough, anymore. Pride couldn't feed his son or keep creditors at bay, and pride couldn't shelter his son from the elements or harsh life on the streets. Isaac had reached his breaking point, and he could only thank God that his best friend, Stiles was there to catch him.

Stiles had been begging Isaac for a long time to go back home to Beacon Hills and find some peace and solace. Stiles had found a partner named Derek Something-or-Other and had been inviting Isaac to live with them for several years to help Isaac get back on his feet.

And that was the most frustrating bit of all, the thing that really pissed Isaac off. His pride had made him force his son to suffer the life of destitution all while he ignored the gravity of their problems and fought for something better...And now?

Now, he had capitulated and he felt that all of his arguing and suffering had been for nothing. All of it, giving Sergei the last of his food because they needed gas money to get to California, the tiredness from staying up on the streets panhandling just for that pitiful change, the couch that he fought to keep buried so as to not worry Sergei...the last hurrah had all been pointless and could have

been avoided if he'd just taken the shot to his ego sooner.

The road demanded a lot from Isaac's malnourished and ill body, and he ended up in a pattern of behavior to regulate himself:

Road line, road line, road line, cough, road line road line, road line, check the rearview, and repeat.

Of course, life in its infinite bounty offered some excitement, occasionally Isaac had to make a turn, and once he had to even backtrack and find the right road. Still, the monotonous tone of the drive was nice, it was relaxing. It was the longest that he had gone without work or sleep in a long time, and that was why he let Sergei nap in the back. It would be boring for a seven year-old, and it had been a long time since Isaac hadn't had to wake him up to bring him along to his job or to the babysitter, when he could find one.

Years of conditioning could only be overridden so much, though, and it wasn't very long before Sergei was stirring.

"Papa?" He muttered, rubbing his eyes, making Isaac's heart melt, as always. Though he had his mother's hair, Sergei had inherited almost else from Isaac's side of the family. He could see himself in the light blue of his eyes, but there was certainly his mother in his son's eyebrows and cheeks, and unfortunately, his father's dimples. Though, Sergei wore them much better.

"Yes, Seryozha?" Isaac asked, using the familiar form of Sergei's Russian name.

"My tam, yeshche?" He asked, his Russian as flawless as his English. Isaac had taught him both, something to help him have a piece of his mother, by. Isaac personally found little use for the language other than whispering things about those who could not speak it. He had only learned it for his mother's sake in the first place. Of course, he really couldn't fault her for it, after all, if he didn't speak Russian, he probably wouldn't have formed quite the same bond with Stiles as he did, seeing as he had been the only one in the entire school who had been able to pronounce his given name.

"No, we still have a long way, to go."

Hearing Isaac speak English, triggered Sergei to mirror his father:

“Okay, papa, but...I have to pee?” He made it a question as though he feared retribution for some reason, which made Isaac flinch at the very idea of ever doing to his son what his father had done to him.

Without a second thought, Isaac pulled over to the side of the road and got out of the car. Sergei patiently waited for him, and held his arms out when Isaac opened his door. Perhaps Sergei was a little too old to be held like a toddler, but Isaac would piss in the face of anyone who told him that he couldn’t hold his son.

Isaac set Sergei down on the asphalt and directed him towards the bushes, standing guard when Sergei implored him to stay behind. (“I can pee on my own, papa!”)

“Papa, what bushes are these?” Sergei asked, showing his curiosity.

Isaac opened his mouth to answer, but his diaphragm contracted violently, instead, sending him into a coughing fit. It wasn’t anything new to him, he’d been coughing for a few days, especially while they were packing, but when he fell to his knees because of the lightheadedness...that’s when he began to worry a little bit. Not because of himself, but because he feared what would happen to his child if he passed out on the road, or worse...while he was driving.

Isaac shuddered the dark thoughts down, he couldn’t allow himself to fall apart, yet. He would make it a point to go to the hospital the moment he returned to Beacon Hills. That thought coupled with the worried stare of Sergei pulled Isaac to his feet.

“Papa, ty v poryadke?”

“I’m...” Isaac fought down another cough. “I’m alright, Seryozha.”

“You’ve been coughing, a lot, papa, I didn’t want to say anything because I thought you’d get better, but you’re not.”

“I’ll be okay.” Isaac said, attempting a smile, he might have pulled it off, or it might have been a grimace, because Sergei’s face fell a little further, and that, right there, was the core of Isaac’s nightmares. He lived to make his son happy in any way possible, and his lie about his health was beginning to crack.

“You’re...you’re not okay, papa. You’re sick.” Sergei was starting to rearrange

his feature into one that Isaac knew well. Sergei may not have thrown fits about getting toys or cereal, but Sergei had cried his fair share of times, and Isaac could see that Sergei was going to make this one of his moments. Isaac firmly believed that if children needed to cry, that they should be able to. However, he was also a stronger supporter of keeping his son out of the dark reality of worry.

“No, I...son, I’m going to be okay.”

“Vy obeshchayesh’?”

“Yes, Sergei, I promise.” Isaac lied, hating himself for doing so. As he said the words, though, he promised himself that they’d be true. He wouldn’t allow himself to fall too ill to guard his son. After all, they were all each other had.

2. Rude

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac and Sergei continue heading towards Beacon Hills, though their arrival doesn't exactly go as planned.

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything

Chapter 2

Isaac

Isaac had learned early on that raising a child was something of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, he could be proud that he had raised his child without too much junk food, but on the other that was because he was too poor to afford to eat out very often...ever. Sergei knew what McDonald's was because of the scant few times Gladys had taken him there. He felt especially guilty when Sergei brought that he was hungry, and all Isaac could offer him was a bologna sandwich.

He remembered when John Stillinski, Stiles' father had taken them on a trip to Los Angeles. The road trip had involved nothing but fast food and it was something that had seared itself into Isaac's brain, something that made him feel inadequate and failing as a father.

It just wasn't feasible when he had barely fifty dollars to his name and still had half the trip to go. Isaac had planned for one twelve-hour shift pulled over onto the side of the road in lieu of a hotel, and he was pushing himself as hard as possible to avoid when he'd have to fall asleep. There was no security on the road and Isaac dreaded the thought of something happening to Sergei while they slept.

Isaac chose a residential road just outside of Colorado as his stopping point. He had hoped to at least make it to Denver before he was forced to stop, but there was a limit to how far he was able to go. His gut was sore from holding his coughs in to keep Sergei's mind at ease, and his eyes were drooping as he

climbed into the backseat, adjusting Sergei so that he was on his back and his son was slumbering on his chest. Sergei managed to sleep until the moment that Isaac was finally settled. He sat up on his elbows, making Isaac twitch as he had to force down another round of coughing.

“Papa, are we there?”

“No, Seryozha, I just...papa is very tired.” Isaac mumbled, not irritated, but feeling sleepy. “You’re waking up, though, aren’t you?”

Sergei’s face fell. “Sorry, papa, I shouldn’t-.” Isaac silenced him by shaking his head, though.

“I’m ripping you from everything you’ve ever known and driving you across the country because I couldn’t...I’m so sorry, son.”

“It’s okay, papa, I don’t mind it.” Sergei said, lazily kicking his legs in the air. “Remember when Mitchel in the apartments laughed at me because we could only afford ramen?”

“Yeah?” Isaac asked a little skeptical as to what Mitchel had to do with them moving until Sergei’s face lit up.

“Well, I bet he’d be super jealous if he knew we got to go to California!” He whispered, excitedly. “And we can still go to the beach sometimes, right? I’ve never been to the beach.”

“Of course we can, son. I mean...we won’t be living exactly there, but I promise, we’ll do a lot more than we were able to in Chicago, I...promise, Seryozha, I swear to you, right now that I’m going to give you a better life.” Isaac said, his throat tightening.

“Papa, you’re so weird, sometimes. I have a good life, I have you.” Sergei said with a chuckle, not grasping the gravity of what his words meant to Isaac.

Isaac only let a few tears escape as he drifted off, Sergei laying on his chest, quietly humming to himself.

Isaac was awakened by Sergei shaking his arm frantically.

“Papa, papa, wake up.”

Isaac didn't *want* to wake up, though. Sleeping had definitely been a mistake. The first thing he did was to begin coughing, his breath coming in wheezes, and his body aching all over. What had been a simple problem was now a lot worse, and Isaac let out a moan as he sat up.

“I'm alright, Seryozha.” Isaac moaned through a chill.

“Papa...papa, you were breathing very loudly, and...I'm sorry, papa, but I have to go to the bathroom.

“Alright...” Isaac muttered, feeling as though his thoughts were forcing their way through molasses “Uh...number one or number two?”

“Two, sorry, daddy. I can go in the bushes, but I didn't want to leave the car.”

Isaac may have been at the very end of his financial rope, but he wasn't ‘shit in the woods’ poor, looking up, he noticed that there was a gas station five miles away, and hopped into the front seat.

“No, we're going to go to a gas station, and I'll get you some breakfast.” Isaac said, swerving only a little as he started another coughing fit, he spit the phlegm out onto the road, not even attempting to look at the color. He knew he was sick, but he didn't think he could handle worrying about it, yet.

“Papa, I think that maybe you should get some medicine, instead.” Sergei said, quietly.

“Seryozha...I'm alright, and I'm not going to let you starve.”

“But-.”

“Dostatochno!” Isaac said, his voice stern, but not cruel, he had learned the lesson from his father. Sometimes, yelling was necessary, but never with malice. “Look at me, Sergei.” Isaac said, his eyes finding his son's in the rearview mirror. Sergei's face was crumbled in worry.

“Have I ever let you starve?”

Sergei shook his head.

“We’ve hit hard times, but have I ever let you go hungry?”

Sergei shook his head, again.

“I’m not going to start now, okay? I’ll be okay and I promise to go to the doctor once we get to Stiles’ house.”

“Okay, papa, I’ll eat.” Sergei said in a defeated tone, making Isaac regret his words.

“Alright, we’re almost there.” Isaac said, his tone softening, considerably. “Do you remember the rules for public bathrooms?”

Sergei nodded. “Never talk to other people, don’t touch the toilet with my hands, and wash them after...twice.”

“That’s right.” Isaac said, smiling in spite of how he felt when he saw the private bathroom which meant that the first rule was a moot point.

Isaac got out of the car, keeping his eyes open for threats as he led Sergei to the bathroom, cursing quietly when he reached out and it was locked.

“Papa...” Sergei whined, dancing in place.

“Okay, okay, let’s go.” Isaac said, taking his hand and leading him inside the dingy store.

It was the epitome of a middle-of-nowhere gas station: Dust caught the light the swirled in accompaniment to the dull buzz signaled their entering. There was more alcohol and cigarettes than food or drinks, and there might have been mold growing on the slowly rotating hotdog cooker in the corner. Isaac suppressed a shudder at the less than hygienic standards.

The clerk was a man about Isaac’s age, an unlit cigarette hanging out of his mouth as though he couldn’t be bothered to wait for his break as he thumbed through a car magazine. His button up was open displaying an a-shirt, but there was really no muscle to display so Isaac assumed it was to show off his tiny tattoo.

“Hey.” Isaac said, approaching the counter. The man didn’t even bother to look up, he just turned to the next page.

“Welcome to Gas-N-Go, how can I help you gas and *go*?” The man asked, placing particular emphasis on the word ‘go’.

“My son needs the bathroom.”

The man didn’t even verbally respond, just tapped a hand written sign next to the cash register. It read:

‘Bathroom for customers only.’

“That’s great, but...” Isaac let out a sigh, and grabbed a pack of the cheapest gum from the counter and slammed it down. “Please, we’ve been driving a long way.”

“Fine, what-the-fuck-ever.” The man grumbled, throwing the key to Isaac, who took it with a glare. He rarely cussed around Sergei and didn’t appreciate it when other people did.

“Come on, Sergei.” Isaac thought for a moment that the man sniggered at the name, but before he could even consider getting mad, Sergei pulled his hand, leading him from the store.

Isaac gave the bathroom a check to make sure it wasn’t too terrible before allowing Sergei to complete his business.

It caused Isaac severe discomfort to have to give the man more of his business, but he needed to feed Sergei, and there was no better time to fill up his tank. There was something in his chest that reminded him of being impressed as the man managed to complete the entire transaction without putting down his magazine, but Isaac ignored it in favor of disdain.

The bright side of the whole experience was the smile on Sergei’s face as he ate his donuts in the back seat.

“You know not to repeat what that man said, right?” Isaac asked, the need to parent overriding everything else now that they were settled and heading on their way.

“I know, papa.”

The day passed too slowly for Isaac’s taste. It might have had something to do with the fact that he felt as though he dying slowly throughout the drive. He desperately wanted to protect Sergei from the sight of him sick, but he could no longer stop coughing, he felt cold even in the heat of summer, and more than once, he felt himself unable to breathe.

Colorado turned into Nevada, and by the time Isaac reached California, he was fading.

“Only...an hour, Seryozha.”

Sergei nodded, but Isaac had never seen him so fraught with worry. He seemed tired, his eyes kept drooping, but he kept alert, his eyes never leaving the back of Isaac’s head.

“Uh...papa, can...I’m hungry?” He finally whispered, his eyes calculating. Isaac knew that there was a plan forming in his son’s mind, but didn’t comment.

“Alright, I have...enough for us to stop off a diner I know.” Isaac had gone there when he was first leaving Beacon Hills, they served a lot of pancakes for very little. It was on the very edge of the town, far enough that not too many people went.

There was a single hill that he crossed and then...he was home. The mountain air refreshing and clean, the trees a vibrant green ocean that seemed to swallow the town, and the specks of people making their way through their day. Nothing so drastically spectacular or special, just...living boring normal lives. And the sign welcoming them to the town with a population of only three thousand. It was perfect, and Isaac let out a sigh...

That quickly devolved into another coughing fit.

Isaac was grateful that the diner was still open and he couldn’t help but grin as he pulled into its parking lot.

“Alright, kiddo, let’s head inside, but stay close, okay?”

Sergei took his hand which Isaac found comfort in, they had made it, they were

home, and when the burden of the trip had been removed, he found himself weak.

“Welcome to Dusty’s, you can seat yourself!” A deep voice shouted from the back when the bell jingled their entrance.

Isaac chose a booth near the back and sat Sergei next to him, before finally relaxing for a moment.

“Uh...papa, what can I order?”

Isaac let out a weak sigh as he pulled out his wallet. The last ten dollars was passed to his son.

“Why don’t you get whatever you want, but make sure that he knows this is all you have, okay? I’m...I’m just going to lay down for a moment, okay? Wake me up when you’re done, and we’ll head to Stiles’.”

“Okay, papa.” Sergei said, quietly, patting his back. Isaac smiled as he allowed his eyes to close shut as his fatigue grew too great for him to bear any longer.

Notes for the Chapter:

So, since this one is new and this is really flowing from me I'm giving you another chapter for this one. The next chapter I post will be for Beneath the Fangs and Claws.

Dostatochno means 'enough!' As in: Stop arguing, shh! Enough!
Seryozha is the diminutive of Sergei, it's like a cute nickname. I got the idea from Anna Karenina, and have always loved Russian diminutive, but this is my favorite.

Enjoy, and I will post again soon.

3. The Unbearable Pain of Solitude.

Summary for the Chapter:

Sergei has to be the man for once and Isaac frets over being alone.

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything.

Sergei

Sergei loved his father more than anything. He always looked out for him and took care of him, for as long as Sergei could remember. It had always been just the two of them, no matter what happened.

Monsters under the bed, bullies from school, class art projects, his papa had always been there for him.

Sergei had had to learn from a very early age what the word ‘poor’ meant and that it meant different things to different people. To the other kids at school it meant that he had to be avoided and laughed at, to the teachers it meant that they always asked if he was okay, like they were trying to get his papa in trouble, Sergei didn’t care for people who behaved like that.

For him and his father, though, being poor meant that they got to spend all of their time together. Sergei liked to watch the world, a lot times he asked questions about the things he saw like why there was a rainbow after it rained, or why ants walked in a straight line.

He wasn’t stupid, even if the other kids sometimes called him that, he noticed that they were always playing on their phones, which is why he got such good grades, he didn’t have one. More than once, he had seen someone, sometimes even older than him crying and screaming because of something that seemed so useless to him. He didn’t see why anyone would want to be on their phones when their papas would play checkers or tag or Super Mario Bros. with them.

He had stopped asking, though. No one wanted to play an ‘old game’ with their parents, except him.

Sergei loved his papa very much, and knew more than his father guessed, sometimes. Like for the past three days his father had been coughing, a lot. Sergei had tried to do what he could to help, when they were packing the trunk of the car, Sergei tried to carry as many boxes as he could, but his papa had only gotten worse. Sergei knew he wasn't just sleeping, but was unsure of what to do. His papa had never been this sick, before, and Sergei felt a little lost when he couldn't wake him up by shaking his arm.

Sergei knew the difference between good strangers and bad strangers. Like when someone on the street tried to talk to him, he had to wait for his father to speak first, but when they were in a restaurant the waiters were okay to talk to, and that's what he waited for.

"Hi there, I'm Chris and I'll be your waiter today, what can I get you?" The man said, he was wearing an apron covered in some grease, and had grey hair, but he didn't look old or dangerous, so Sergei looked up in his eyes.

"Can you get me a doctor?"

The man's eyebrows raised. "What do you need a doctor for, little man?"

"My...my papa won't wake up, I think he's really sick, he's been coughing for a few days, and I tried, but he's not...not waking up." Sergei didn't want to admit that he was afraid, he was grown up enough to handle taking care of his father. "I'll give you this if you help him." Sergei added, holding out the money his papa had given him. He might have grown up with very much, but he knew that money helped adults take people seriously.

"Whoa, whoa, little man, you don't have to pay me, I can call a doctor, but I'm going to need a little more information. What's your name?"

"Sergei Isaakovich Lahey, but my papa calls me Seryozha." Sergei said, not knowing if the man would need that information.

"Alright, I'm Chris Argent, but no one ever gave me a nickname, especially one as cool as yours." Sergei smiled a little. "Can you tell me your papa's name?"

"Isaac, but I'm not supposed to call him that, Gladys said so."

"Who is Gladys, is she close by?"

“No, she’s in Chicago, she used to watch me when papa went to work, but she didn’t move with us.”

“Okay, I’m going to go into the back and call the police, okay?”

Sergei’s eyes widened in fear and he shook his head, fearing he had made a mistake. “No, no, no! Not the police, he’s not a bad papa, he’s just asleep! Please, just a doctor.”

Chris held up his hands. “Okay, okay, not the police, but...Okay, I’m going to call Doctor Deaton, and have him come here, you can stay here and color and eat, does that sound better?”

Sergei nodded, he didn’t want the police to take his papa away for falling asleep, being sick wasn’t his fault.

“Alright.” Chris pulled out some crayons from his apron and placed them on the table and slid the coloring menu closer to him. “What would you like to eat?”

“Whatever this can buy me, my papa said this was all the money we had.”

For the second time, Chris waved his money away. “How about you get whatever you want and we’ll say it’s on the house. Have you heard that expression, before?”

Sergei nodded. “It means...free, right?”

“Yep.” He said, smiling, making Sergei feel better. His papa would be happy to know that he’d eaten.

“Can I have...this, but without blueberries?” He asked, pointing to the pancakes. The calmness of Chris’ voice and the fact that his papa was still breathing was keeping him from worrying too much. Surely the adult knew better, and if he wasn’t upset, Sergei wasn’t going to be a baby by being upset, either.

“Alright, why don’t you color, and let me call the doctor for your papa, okay?”

“I...thank you, but I’m...” Sergei paused, but didn’t want to say what was on his mind.

“Are you nervous?” Chris asked, and Sergei nodded.

“Alright, do you see that man over there?” Chris said pointing to a man in a tan uniform, Sergei nodded. “His name is Jordan Parrish, he’s a deputy for the sheriff’s office. I promise he won’t take you away from your papa, but he’ll make sure that you stay safe.”

“But...”

“You’re papa keeps you safe, doesn’t he? He protects you?”

Sergei nodded. “He’s always looked after me.”

“Well, right now your papa is sick, he’s not feeling too well, so he can’t. Parrish will make sure that you’re alright, I promise.”

“And he won’t take me away from my papa?”

Chris shook his head. “Your papa being sick is not a reason for anyone to take you away.”

“Okay...” Sergei said, quietly.

“Jordan!” Chris shouted, making the man turn around. Sergei had always thought of cops as rude, older, and mean, but he felt like Parrish was the same age as his papa. It made him feel a little better.

“Something the matter?” Parrish asked, smiling widely at Sergei who felt much better about his decision to ask for help.

“This is Sergei, his dad’s not feeling too well, so I’m going to call Alan, but I didn’t want to leave him alone. Do you think you could sit with him until Alan gets here?”

Isaac

Nothing was as heart wrenching as waking up without Sergei nearby. No, Isaac could handle heart wrenching, this was terror Isaac had no words for. He was in

the hospital, which was immediately recognizable, but the room was empty, and that was all Isaac cared about.

“Seryozha!” He called out, pulling the thin blanket off of his body, revealing the humiliating hospital gown that had been placed on his body. The last thing he remembered was being in the diner with his son, and now he had nothing but the absolute horror of having lost Sergei.

“Seryozha!” Isaac screamed, again. His lungs were sore, but he didn’t care, all he wanted was to find his son.

Seemingly summoned by Isaac’s shouting, a doctor with a bald head and kindly disposition came in, his eyes wide with worry. It took him a moment to realize that he recognized the man. It was Alan Deaton. When Isaac had been younger, Deaton had been the pediatrician, but it seemed he had moved onto general care.

“Isaac, you’re-.”

“Where’s my son?” Isaac demanded, willing to do anything to find Sergei, again.

“Sergei is alright, Isaac, he’s with Parrish.”

“Who the fuck is Parrish?” Isaac snapped, his control over his language momentarily faltering in the stressful moment.

Deaton’s grin grew a little. “You actually went to school with him, I believe. He’s the deputy here. When you passed out at the diner, Chris called me, and had Parrish sit with Sergei.”

“That’s a great story, but I asked a very simple question. Where is-,”

“Papa!”

Sergei came in, holding the hand of a man that Isaac did not recognize at first, and in any case, it didn’t matter, he ran forward and embraced his son, the stranger releasing his hand, immediately.

“Ty v poryadke? Kto-nibud' tebe bol'no?” He asked, his heart still thundering wildly even though Sergei was safe in his arms.

“I’m okay, papa. I promise.” Sergei whispered, the smile on his face fading a little, but Isaac wasn’t even mad at him.

“Mr. Lahey, I swear, I didn’t mean to frighten you. I was just taking-.”

“My son.” Isaac interrupted looking up to glare at Parrish, whose smile fell a little.

“With all due respect, you were passed out, and some of us thought that you wouldn’t want *your son*,” he placed emphasis on the word, “sitting in the hospital alone while you were asleep.”

“That...” Isaac paused and felt the beginnings of shame beginning to lick at his insides. He might have overreacted. “That’s a point. Still...”

“I didn’t know when you were waking up and if I had, I would have been here with him.” Parrish said, his soft green eyes imploring Isaac to understand.

“I...I’m sorry. I just...he’s all I have.”

“I get it. I mean...I don’t exactly, but I can understand where you’re coming from.” Parrish said, the grin returning to his face. Isaac could see why Sergei had trusted him, there was something about his face that made Isaac feel safe, even if he was still irked at the scare he had gone through.

“If the shouting is all done, Isaac, you really should be back in that bed.” Deaton said, extending his hand to help Isaac up, who felt a little weak with the adrenaline leaving his system. Isaac took it, but kept a hold of Sergei’s as well.

Isaac got back into the hospital bed and pulled Sergei up with him. Sergei cuddled into the side of his chest, occasionally pulling a piece of candy from his pocket. Under Isaac’s curious gaze, Sergei blushed and offered him one. Isaac took it and smiled at the taste of the lemon Skittle. It had been a long time since he had had candy, and he savored the sweet taste.

“Parrish bought them for me.” He explained.

Isaac bristled a little at the gesture before reminding himself that it had probably been done in kindness, not as a way to show Isaac up.

“Thank you.” He muttered, a little more harshly than he had anticipated, before Parrish could respond, though Isaac turned to Deaton.

“Is there...am I alright?”

“That’s...for the moment, yes, but we need to have a conversation about you and how you take care of yourself, especially if your son is that important to you.”

If there had been shame at Parrish buying his son candy, there was a complete feeling of disgrace and humiliation at Deaton’s words. It wasn’t as though Isaac mistreated himself for fun or because he wanted to, he had made sacrifices for his son.

“You had a fever of a hundred and two with a severe case of bronchitis. It probably wouldn’t have been so bad, but you...Isaac, when was the last time that you ate?”

“Four days ago.” Isaac muttered, his face burning red in his shame.

“Did you really think that that was wise?” Deaton asked, disapprovingly.

“I thought that I was nearly out of money and that I needed to ensure that my son ate.” Isaac snapped. “He is and always will be my first priority.”

“You can’t protect him if you’re passed out.” Parrish said, and Isaac glared at him, again. He didn’t know why the deputy was still there, but Parrish held up his hands. “I know, I’m just a deputy, and it’s not my place, but I can see a tight bond between you two, and Sergei talked of nothing but you, you need to be there for him.”

“A few hours with my son and you think that you know better than I do how to raise him?” Isaac asked, his voice heated.

“I didn’t say that. I’m simply...” Parrish sighed. “I’m sorry, it’s not my business. I’m going to go, Alan.”

“Wait!” Sergei said, sitting up. Parrish got closer and Sergei smiled, even when Isaac wrapped a protective arm around his shoulders. “Thank you for watching me and the Skittles...oh, and telling me about being a marine.”

“No problem, Seryozha, I’ll see you around, okay?” Parrish said, his blinding grin flashing at Sergei before he walked out.

Isaac was stunned, not because Parrish had used his nickname for his son, but because he had pronounced it correctly.

Deaton huffed impatiently. “Regardless of whether or not you agree with how he told you, he’s right. You were extremely malnourished, Isaac, and that coupled with your illness put you in a very precarious position.”

“My papa’s better now, right?” Sergei asked, sounding worried, and Isaac held him closer, trying to convey that he was there and would always be there.

“He is, we gave you some antibiotics which seem to be working, and a pack of nutrients, but Isaac-.”

“I’m here to live with a friend, actually...you probably remember him, too. Stiles? Broke his arm like three times...” Isaac let his sentence drop when Deaton began nodding. “He invited me and Sergei to live with him until I can get back on my feet, but I...I used the last of my funds getting here, it was a mistake, it won’t happen, again.”

Notes for the Chapter:

First, translations: “Ty v poryadke? Kto-nibud' tebe bol'no?” is "Are you alright? Did anybody hurt you?"

Again, I'm going off of very limited knowledge, so if you see a mistake, please point it out without stabbing me.

I wanted you to see the world from Sergei's perspective, even if it's only half a chapter. How he views things is important to understanding his character.

So, I'm moving along with both fics, but this one is coming a lot easier for me. I'm up to 20,000 words on this one, all lined up in a neat little row, waiting to be published.

I really hope you enjoy it, and please share your thoughts on either and/or both.

Thank you all.

4. A Hint of Shyness

Summary for the Chapter:

Stiles and Isaac reconnect.

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything

Isaac

Isaac managed to make a deal with Deaton. There was no way in hell that he was going to let himself be separated from Sergei, but Deaton wanted him to remain for observation. Normally, people weren't allowed to remain overnight, but Isaac told Deaton point blank that if he was going to stay, so was Sergei. Deaton had capitulated, albeit with a large amount of muttering under his breath.

Part of the reason Isaac didn't mind staying in the hospital was the food. Even with his heavily restricted budget, Isaac thought that he might prefer his meals of ramen to the dry mashed potatoes and metallic chicken fried steak, but it was food, and he scarfed it down with abandon.

He hadn't realized how hungry he was until he had blown his way through three trays of the substandard meal. The concept of unlimited food was one that was relatively foreign to him, he had not eaten his fill since the last time he was in Beacon Hills, and the feeling of being full on its own filled him with a sense of contentedness. Half of his terrible disposition it seemed, had been his malnourishment, and the antibiotics were in his system, helping to fight that which he had been unable to control...at least not directly.

Now that they were what Isaac considered 'home', he was being taken care of, and had Sergei nestled into his arm, slurping down Jell-O, he promised himself to never again let things fall to such a level, again. He would take advantage of the hand that Stiles had extended to him, and use it to bring himself to a place where Sergei would never again need to offer to starve himself so that Isaac would have medicine. Never again would Isaac have to watch with a forced smile while Sergei guiltily ate the last of their food. Never again would he allow himself to fail his son. He may have always protected and fed Sergei, but life for

his son could have been world better than what it had been.

He would take some time- his pride would allow no more than a week- to recoup himself, build his strength, but he would find a way to make them survive. He would find a job or two, and he would try to give his son the life he deserved. It might have been different if Sergei were bratty or ungrateful, but the child had never been anything but polite, and in all honesty, Isaac's rock. He deserved better, and Isaac swore that he would get it.

Pulling Isaac from his thoughts was a knock at the door. It was rather late, so Isaac naturally assumed that it was Deaton, which made it a pleasant surprise when Stiles walked through the door.

His hair was buzzed, a style he had once adopted in the fifth grade, but changed throughout middle and high school, he wore very thick glasses, suggesting some ill-advised geek chic, but on Stiles they accentuated his features. His brown eyes melted in concern and he shook his head slowly as he took Isaac in.

"What in the ever-loving *frak*, Isaac?" He said, bringing a smile to Isaac's lips. He didn't feel truly at home until Stiles' worried smile warmed up the room.

"Gennadij, it's...it's good to see you." The shakiness in Isaac's voice stunned and embarrassed him, if only a little. His walls collapsed in the face of his friend, his pride, his steadfastness, and for a moment, Isaac just wanted to be held and soothed.

When they had been children, it had been Stiles who healed his emotional wounds whenever his father tore them open with his words and his fists. Stiles and Isaac had been close friends, even when Scott had joined the group. Stiles couldn't have defeated the actual monster in Isaac's life, but he had certainly given Isaac a shell of sorts that he could use to endure.

Stiles' eyes rolled up and he let out a sigh that even after eight years, Isaac recognized as exasperated. "Just because I haven't seen you in a long time, doesn't mean that you can use my name."

"Papa, kto eto?" Sergei asked, tugging at Isaac's hospital gown, his voice defensive. His head was turned away from Stiles which Isaac understood as his son's wariness of the man who was a stranger to him. If his body language wasn't enough, the language that Stiles wouldn't recognize was enough to prove

that Stiles would have to earn Sergei's trust. A complication of their sheltered life that Isaac had not thought of.

It also brought with it a confusing contrast. Sergei seemed to be shy around Stiles, but had seemed to be getting along well enough to the deputy. Isaac considered Stiles to be as friendly as people came, and made a mental note to ask why Sergei preferred Parrish to Stiles.

"This is my good friend; Gennadij Stillinski, but he will demand that you call him Stiles. He hates his name-."

"Well, wouldn't you if your mother named you; Gennadij, used the diminutive; Genya, and then became known as Genim for some reason? Seriously, the best day of my life was when I picked my own name. Best decision with no regrets." Stiles ranted, his trademarked loud voice not having changed in the years.

"Stiles...babbling." Isaac said, quietly. It had been a common refrain from both him and Scott...*and* their teachers when they were younger. Isaac was fondly glad that his friend had not lost the trait, though.

"Right, sorry, so...like your dad said, I'm Stiles. What's your name?" He asked with a grin, extending his hand.

The look Sergei gave in response could have best been described as 'cold' as he offered a quiet "Sergei", and turning back to Isaac.

The rudeness didn't seem to shock Stiles, though. He merely shrugged and sat down in a chair next to the bed. Isaac had raised his son better than that, though, so it was he who reprimanded him.

"Sergei, don't be rude, please. Stiles is a good friend of mine, and it's because of him that we're going to have a better life. Introduce yourself properly." Isaac said, his voice stern and unyielding.

Sergei shrank at the scolding, and turned to Stiles properly, taking his hand and shaking it.

"I'm Sergei Lahey, nice to meet you Mr. Stillinski."

Stiles, who had blushed during Isaac's explanation, ginned even wider. "It's a

pleasure, and you can call me Stiles if you want, or Mr. Stillinski...or Mr. Mouth, anything that makes you comfortable.”

Isaac rolled his eyes, but smiled easily around Stiles, and even Sergei’s lips twitched a little.

“How...?” Isaac questioned, wondering how long Sergei’s animosity would last for, but choosing instead a question of Stiles’ presence.

“I’m well connected.” Stiles said, rubbing his hands together like a movie villain. “Parrish told my father that you were here, a crime for which I have not even begun to chastise you for, by the way, my dad called Derek, and Derek told me when I got home from work.”

“Okay...That explains how you knew I was here, but it’s past visiting hours.” Isaac pointed out.

Stiles snorted, his eyes taking on the all-too-familiar mischievous glint of their youth. “Well, I might have snuck in to find you, but...” He let out a sigh. “Melissa caught me, so I had to beg her to let me see you. She gave me an hour and a long list of demands about keeping you in bed, not too much excitement, blah blah blah.” I knew there was a reason that I avoided the medical profession.” He explained.

“That and the fact that you’d get distracted during the surgeries.” Isaac said with a chuckle, the first true laugh in a long time, which told him that despite his wounded ego, he had made the right decision.

“Oh, har har.” Stiles said in mock annoyance. “Though, to be fair, you have an excellent and salient point, so I suppose I can’t be mad at you.”

The light banter was only a cover and Isaac knew it. Stiles may have been a fun person, but he was also caring, sometimes to a fault, and Isaac knew that the promised chastisement was coming.

“We talked about it in high school. Remember? We decided that you, Scott, and I couldn’t be doctors or lawyers for various reasons.”

“Well, Scott proved us wrong at least.”

Isaac's eyebrow hiked up in surprise. "Scott became a doctor?"

Stiles let out a laugh. "Are you kidding? He was crushed for two weeks when that scorpion that he and Deaton were treating died. No, he passed the bar a year ago, he's working under Jackson's father, now."

Isaac felt a bizarre mix of pride for his friend and the sickening humiliation at his current situation. He knew from their phone conversations that Stiles was a professor at the local community college. Finding out that Scott was practicing law was a blow to his own life.

Stiles was a master at recognizing Isaac's moods, even after all these years, and he proved it, by putting his hand on Isaac's shoulder (something that Sergei glared at).

"Hey, you have a son. Scott and I are still trying to settle into married life and our jobs. It's...I'm not going to lie, it's put you in a hard place, but...look at him. He's frakking adorable." Stiles said, sneaking in the compliment to Sergei in his words.

"I know, it's just..." Isaac let out a frustrated huff. "The dreams of high school die a painful death, I guess I'm still grieving a little. I wouldn't trade it for you though, Seryozha." Isaac said, looking down to his son, making things very clear: A rich life without Sergei was infinitely more empty and cold than a poor life with him.

Sergei reciprocated with a hug, one that intentionally blocked Stiles from joining, but Isaac just shook his head. He'd be forced to reckon with his son's attitude soon enough, but for the moment, he decided that he'd need to at least attempt to explain his actions to Stiles.

Notes for the Chapter:

So, I went with a new source for Stiles' real name and fan name all in one go.

I long to hear your opinions on this, and with that not so veiled and very tired request, I take my leave.

Thank you. :)

5. Bilingual.

Summary for the Chapter:

Sergei gets protective and Isaac prepares to leave the hospital.

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything.

Isaac

“So...this is a thing.” Stiles muttered while Sergei went to the bathroom. Isaac had been unwilling to let him go alone, but his room had a toilet attached to it, and so Isaac really couldn’t justify getting up.

“Stiles...I...” Isaac hadn’t properly cried in a long time. A thick shell that very few people could penetrate had guaranteed that, but in the presence of Stiles, he finally began sobbing. In the absence of Sergei, Stiles moved forward without a word and embraced him. Eight years of suffering, fighting so that Sergei would have a life worth living, wanting to defend and provide for his son and failing poured out of Isaac in the form of hot tears that bled over Stiles’ shirt.

“I know what...what you’re going to say, but I...I tried.” Isaac sobbed. “I tried so hard to just...do this. Be independent and fucking give my son something, and Stiles, I failed, I failed so fucking hard and it hurts. It hurts to think of what I dragged him through, because he’s...Stiles he’s everything to me, and the only reason that I wake up anymore.”

When Isaac paused to take in a gulping breath, Stiles spoke.

“Well, that’s not what I meant at all, man. I was never going to, nor will I ever criticize how you raised Sergei. From what I’ve seen, you didn’t fail, you-.”

“Oh, save it!” Isaac snapped, his throat sore from crying. “I know what it means when someone has to move in with their friends, what it means when I’m in the fucking hospital because I was malnourished. You said it yourself; you needed to give me a talking to.”

“Actually, I believe I said I need to chastise you, and that’s not what I was going to chastise you for.” Stiles said, his tone still kind and light despite Isaac’s poor attitude. “I wanted to talk to you about making sure that you took care of yourself. Passing out at the diner is not how I imagined you coming into town. As for your money problems...I’m not going to blame you for that.”

Isaac opened his mouth to argue, but Stiles gave him a glare.

“Isaac, you’re a single father. You’ve been a single father for years, and yet, I just saw a kid who’s fine. You did as best as you could. Life is...” Stiles actually looked around to see if Sergei was back. “Life is shitty, sometimes, and I’m not going sit here and admonish you for trying...or for your stubborn pride.”

“I-.”

“Papa?” Sergei’s voice was worried and Isaac immediately sat up.

Sergei, in a combination of his protectiveness for Isaac and his displeasure for Stiles, ran forward and pushed on his chest.

“Leave my papa alone, padla!” Sergei shouted, trying to push a taken aback Stiles from the room.

“Sergei Isaakovich Lahey! Sest' i ne govorit', kak eto snova!”

It was the loudest Isaac had been with Sergei in a very long time, and Sergei’s expression showed that. For a moment, he stood there with his mouth open looking nonplussed about Isaac’s anger, before he crossed his arms over his chest and began to pout.

“He was making you cry.” He argued, and the only reason Isaac’s disposition softened was because Isaac realized that Sergei truly thought that it had been Stiles who made him cry.

“No, son. Adults...adults just cry, sometimes. Stiles didn’t do anything but give me a hug to make me feel better.”

Sergei processed that for a moment, before he ducked his head in shame.

“Sorry, Stiles.” He mumbled. “I thought that you...I don’t like people hurting

my papa.”

Stiles nodded. “I don’t like people hurting Isaac, either.” He said. “Now that you’re both here, I promise you, that I will never cause your dad pain.” He said.

Stiles may have been quick to forgive, but only time would tell if he was quick to forget. Isaac worried that his friend was having second thoughts about having them move in with him.

Stiles’ grin returned, though as he sat back down. “So, you went with Russian?” He asked, playfully changing the subject.

“Natasha was Russian, and since I already knew the language...Being bilingual is a positive for his generation.”

“Positive for every generation, really.” Stiles said, nodding his head. “I’m still really rusty with it, though. I got that you told him to sit down, but what was the other thing, about speaking?”

“Basically, I told him to watch his tongue.” Isaac said, turning a dark eye to his son. “I have no idea where he picked up words like that.”

“It’s what you called the landlord when he threatened to kick us out.” Sergei explained.

Isaac blushed and shook his head. There were moments that he had cussed around Sergei, but he tried to keep them few and far in-between. It seemed that Sergei was more observant than Isaac had assumed.

“Well, just...don’t say it, again.”

Stiles gave him a critical look, and Isaac knew why. The first words that Isaac had taught Stiles had been all the cuss words in Russia, they hadn’t been any older than Sergei either.

“I’m sorry, papa, and I’m sorry, Stiles.”

“Hey.” Stiles said, his tone turning serious for a moment. “You were defending your father, and you know what? I find that to be pretty admirable.”

Isaac was torn between wanting Sergei to understand that what he had was wrong and accepting Stiles' attempts to keep the fragile bridge between him and Sergei intact. In the end, Sergei's smile at Stiles' words made him choose the latter.

"Papa defends me, too." Sergei said, coming out of his shell a little. "Last year, there was a kid being mean to me because...I don't have that many shirts, and so papa made him leave me alone."

It wasn't nearly as heroic as Sergei was making it out to seem. Isaac had fully been willing to fight in that particular situation, but it turned out that the child's parents were very understanding. Isaac opened his mouth to say so, but there was another knock at the door, and Melissa, the nurse that Isaac recognized from when he was younger.

"I said an hour, Stiles." She said, sternly.

"It's only been..." Stiles began, looking down at his phone. "Oh, an hour and-."

"And a half." Melissa said for him.

"Vremya bezhit." Stiles said, shrugging and standing up.

"Will you come by, tomorrow?" Isaac asked, feeling a little tired, but still not wanting to see his friend leave.

"I'm off, tomorrow, so obviously I'm going to be here." Stiles promised, heading out with a smile and a wave. Melissa checked his vitals, before letting him know that he would only have a day more to go.

"Sergei, I want to talk to you about your attitude with Stiles." Isaac said once the room was quiet.

"Papa, I-." Sergei began to protest as he crawled back into the hospital bed with Isaac.

"Nyet. Seryozha, you may not realize it, but Stiles is doing us a very big favor, perhaps the most important favor of your life. While we're living with Stiles, I'll be able to go out and find a better job, and then we can have a better life."

“He was trying to take you away.” Sergei whispered into Isaac’s shoulder.

“What?” Isaac asked with a shocked laugh. “You think that Stiles was trying to take me away?”

Sergei nodded, his face full of actual fear which made any humor in the situation die a very quick death.

“Sergei, Stiles is married. We’re best friends, but we’re *just* friends. Why do you think he’s trying to take me away?”

“Because you talked about him a lot back home, and when he came in he was smiling really big like he was happy to see you-.”

“He probably was, because we’re friends, Sergei. Stiles doesn’t love me like that.” No one had ever loved Isaac like that, and that’s the way he preferred things. He had Sergei to take care of, he didn’t have time for a love life.

“You weren’t crying because he broke your heart?” Sergei asked, and it was light enough that Isaac could chuckle at that.

“No, I was crying because...because I messed up, son. I let myself get sick when I should have been taking care of you. I should never have let it get that bad, and I’m sorry.” His confession came out much more somber than he had intended.

“It’s okay, papa. Mr. Parrish was really nice, and I’m just glad that you’re better.”

“I’ll never let that happen, again. If you want to meet people, it shouldn’t happen because I’m passed out.” Isaac said, hugging his son tightly, feeling more tears threatening to push their way out, and Isaac realized how...crushed his soul had become without him realizing it.

“I love you, papa, I just wanted you to get better. I don’t like it when you’re sick.”

“See, even if Stiles wasn’t married, why would I want him? You’re the only man in my life and I like that.” Isaac said, kissing the top of Sergei’s head while he tickled his ribs.

“Papa! Stop it!” Sergei squealed.

The next morning, Isaac ensured that Sergei was still with him. Waking up without his son was something that he hoped would never happen, again. Secure in the knowledge, he got up to go to the bathroom, locking the door before he did, and then taking a quick shower. At least...he had intended it to be a quick shower, but he really hadn't realized how much he needed one until the steaming water fell over his aching muscles and the steam helped him to breathe easier. He honest-to-God moaned at the feeling of it all.

When he heard the door open, he tensed for a moment, watching the dull gray shower curtain like he expected something sinister, but only Sergei's voice drifted through.

“Papa, Dr. Deaton is here, he says that he wanted to give you a checkup, but I didn't want to let him in without your permission.”

“Alright, wait outside for me.” Isaac replied, turning off the water and waiting for Sergei to shut the door, again, before he wrapped a towel around himself, and hurried to the door. Deaton was on the other side, and Isaac gave an apologetic smile with a matching one to the janitor behind him, who eyed him in surprise. Isaac wasn't really surprised a single meal hadn't brought back any of his body's mass and he knew that he looked painfully thin. Blushing in shame, Isaac quickly stepped back to grab his hospital gown, the thing fabric offering a surprising amount of comfort.

“Isaac, how are you feeling?” Deaton asked, letting himself into the room.

Isaac shrugged. “I felt okay when I woke up and now that I've taken a shower, I feel even better. I'm ready to go home.”

“I'll be the judge of that.” Deaton said with a small smile, even though Isaac let out a huff of frustration. “You know that I'm only trying to help, right?”

Isaac nodded. “I wouldn't have stayed if I didn't, but I really think that I'm doing better. This...” he lowered his voice, his eyes falling to Sergei, who was watching a rerun of The Powerpuff Girls on the T.V. that hung over the bed. “This isn't something new for me, being...underfed. I've gotten used to it.”

Deaton shook his head in a pitying manner that Isaac didn't like. "Isaac, this is... this is bad. You could have died-." He whispered.

"But, I didn't. I'm alive, I'm feeling better, and I'm fully sane. I just want to get Sergei settled in our new place. He shouldn't...I've fucked up a lot, but I've always, *always* kept a roof over his head, it's important for stability. I don't want his first days in Beacon Hills to be spent in a hospital."

Deaton's eyes darted between Sergei and Isaac before he let out a heavy sigh.

"You're moving in with Stiles, right?"

Isaac nodded.

"Well...I suppose he'll make sure you eat. He has a nurturing spirit."

"He's getting me on my feet so things like this don't happen, again. I swear on my life, Alan, I won't let it get this bad, again."

"You're giving me one final checkup, and I need to make sure that the infection in your lungs is receding."

Isaac let out a breath with a smile. "Thank you, Alan."

Notes for the Chapter:

Translations:

Padla is equivalent to asshole, or so I'm told, it might be stronger (if someone knows, please help!).

Sest' i ne govorit', kak eto snova: 'Sit down, and never speak like that, again!'

Vremya bezhit: Time Flies!

Also, traditionally a Russian has a patronymic after their name instead of a middle name, so Sergei becomes: Sergei Isaakovich Lahey.

Okay, so since I'm typing this at a fantastical rate, literally about three chapters a day...I'm posting this one more. I wasn't going to, but I love it so much, so please don't hate me. I'm actually considering converting this into

a novel when I'm done. Things will have to change, obviously, but I've never written anything that has flowed from me like this, before. I really hope you guys are enjoying it.

Thank you.

6. Derek

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac meets Derek and learns that his friends seek Sergei's safety and happiness

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything

Isaac

Isaac first impression of Derek was that of an MMA fighter who had woken up on the wrong side of the bed. His bushy eyebrows were drawn down in a scowl, and his green eyes offered no comfort. It was actually quite surprising when Isaac compared them to the warm eyes of Deputy Parrish. Not that Isaac had found warmth in them, particularly, they had just been...warm, like Stiles'

Derek's large forearms were folded across his massive chest in what Isaac took to be a sign of displeasure, though Isaac knew exactly why: Derek had lost most of his family when his uncle had accidentally burned down their home. It had sparked some pretty wild rumors when they had been younger. Derek had been only a few years older than them at the time, and had closed himself off from the world. Isaac hadn't been there to see how Stiles had managed to get Derek out of his shell, but felt a brotherly protective streak flare up within him when he saw the man. Derek looked mean and angry and he worried what sort of relationship he shared with Stiles.

Isaac had his own closed off nature, though, one that caused him to pull Sergei close to him when Stiles and Derek had arrived in the hospital room to help them to their house.

"So, this sourwolf here is Derek, Derek, this is Isaac and Sergei." Stiles explained, seeming rather upbeat, though Isaac felt his heart beginning to sink. It seemed as though Derek was fully opposed to the plan Stiles had created.

If Sergei's reception of Stiles the day before had been cold, now it could best be described as 'arctic', though this time it seemed to be born of fear rather than

dislike or jealousy, he promptly moved himself so that he was hiding behind Isaac.

“I know, right?” Stiles asked him with a frown. “He’s been cranky all morning. I think it has something to do with me taking my jeep instead of his Camaro. I think he wanted to show off.”

“The jeep isn’t safe, babe.” Derek growled, the juxtaposition of the obvious affection in the term of endearment with the tone made Isaac’s eyes widen in surprise.

“So...you’re not mad that we’re moving in?”

Derek’s eyes roamed over Isaac’s face, before moving to the sliver of Sergei that he could see before he shook his head, stiffly.

“Not at all. Stiles told me how you two looked out for each other growing up and that now you need help, and our home is always open to those in need.”

He said it all with complete sincerity and perhaps a spark of fondness, forcing Isaac to admit that he must have genuinely been angry about not bringing his Camaro. It was odd, but as long as Isaac wasn’t a burden, he didn’t mind.

“Deaton gave you a clean bill of health?” Stiles asked.

“Well...it could be cleaner, when we get your place, I might need to borrow some Windex to spruce it up, but for the moment, I’m free to go.”

Stiles laughed at his joke, but Derek just raised an eyebrow, and let out a sigh.

“I see you and my husband get your humor from the same dry bank.” He said.

“Coming from the man who wouldn’t know a joke if it bit him square on the...pupil, that’s...probably the funniest thing you’ve ever said.”

“Well, we should get going, I bet you’re just dying to get out of this place...I know I am.” Stiles said, moving towards the door. Isaac moved forward to follow him, but was slightly hindered by Sergei’s arms wrapped around his legs.

“It’s alright, Seryozha.” Isaac said in a comforting tone, but Sergei was eyeing

Derek with a fearful expression.

“On bol'shoy strashno, papa.” He whispered.

“Nah, he just looks like it, he’s really a teddy bear when you get down to it.” Stiles said, smiling at Sergei. “Derek, can you try smiling? You’re scaring the kid.”

The change was almost miraculous. While Stiles always looked harmless, even when enraged, Derek’s features went from frightening to welcoming in the blink of an eye. The smile really changed the man, and the moment he put his arms down, he looked more like a friendly uncle than one that had real skeletons in the closet.

At the very least, it worked well enough that Sergei was willing to walk towards the door, though his hand was like a vice in Isaac’s own.

Isaac collected the small plastic bag with his belongings, which didn’t amount to much: A set of car keys, his wallet, and a small, battered flip phone. Isaac noticed that Stiles quickly put his smart phone in his pocket when Isaac gathered his things, and he felt the familiar embarrassment at having substandard technology. He didn’t even admit that his wasn’t activated, he had been unable to pay the bill for months. He only kept it to serve as a calculator, a watch, and an alarm.

“So, from what I was told, your car is still at the diner, we could go pick it up now or we can do that later, whichever you prefer.” Stiles said, leading the way out of the hospital with his hand in Derek’s.

Derek let out a snort at Stiles’ words.

“What?” Stiles asked, his eyes raising up in a look that Isaac saw through, right away. Sure enough, Derek let out a sigh.

“What you were told? You mean, what you eavesdropped on, right?”

Stiles blushed and Isaac laughed at knowing that his friend had not lost his rebellious nature over the years.

“Hey, I’m almost thirty, if my father hasn’t learned to keep his conversations

private by now...I have absolutely no hope in the man. “

Derek rolled his eyes dotingly, and as his lips twitch a little in response to Stiles’ comment, making Isaac question whether or not he had judged their relationship too soon. Perhaps Derek just had a gruff exterior.

“I...I guess it would be easier to just go to your house, first, so I know where you live, and then go and get my car later.”

“Sounds like a plan.” Stiles said, clapping his hands together.

“See, babe, this is what I was talking about this morning; everything that you say comes out sounding like you have some nefarious scheme in the works.” Derek said.

“Papa, Chto ‘nefarious’ v vidu?” Sergei whispered, his hand still tight in Isaac’s. Isaac supposed that he’d have to get used to it. It was obvious to Isaac that Sergei was distrusting of Derek, and probably Stiles, and he was using his second language as a shield to keep them at a distance. Stiles may have been goofy, but he was also smart, Isaac could see a look of understanding cross his face, and he didn’t respond, for which Isaac gave him a grateful smile.

“Um...Eto oznachayet, ozornoy . No Derek byl tol'ko shutil.”

Derek’s eyes burned in curiosity at the reference to his name, but he didn’t ask what had been said. Isaac shot him an apologetic look, and in return, he received a small smile.

“On ne pokhozh on shutit, chto chasto.”

Stiles snorted, but Isaac gave Sergei a serious look.

“Ne imeyu v vidu.” He warned, and Sergei nodded, his face falling a little.

Stiles’ jeep looked the same as Isaac had remembered it, the same blue paintjob, the dented frame, and if he looked carefully enough, he thought he could make out the scratch from the time when he bumped into it with his wallet chain after a night of ill-advised drinking. Because of his past, the sheriff had not physically punished Isaac, but he had received a scolding so bad, he had felt about as big as an ant.

In spite of the one bad memory, Isaac had had plenty of good times in the jeep as well, and he felt his mouth curl into a smile as they approached.

“Do you still call her Baby?” Isaac asked, releasing Sergei’s hand for just a moment so he could pull himself up by the frame, before reaching down and picking his son up. Even in his less than open mood, Sergei could not disguise the small whoop of glee as he was hoisted into the air.

“I did, but then Derek got jealous, so I named her Irene, after the song: ‘Goodnight, Irene.’”

“I didn’t get jealous-.”

“No, you just let out a growl of frustration for fun.” Stiles interrupted, rolling his eyes.

Derek got in the back seat, confusing Isaac for a moment, before Derek explained.

“Sergei should sit in the front, I installed airbags, and it will be safer.”

Isaac nodded, touched by Derek’s thoughtfulness.

“But, papa...” Sergei began, but Isaac shook his head.

“It’s safer in the front, I’m right here.” Isaac said, consolingly. He placed Sergei in the front and buckled his seatbelt, before sitting back down, and reaching forward to hold his son’s hand.

When the jeep started, the roar was exactly the same as Isaac remembered, though it seemed that Stiles had become a better driver in the interim. He exited the parking lot, carefully, and when his eyes glanced to Sergei, Isaac realized that he was doing it to keep him safe, something Isaac was grateful for.

The sound and feel of the wind in his hair, made Isaac close his eyes for a moment, feeling at peace with the world, before he turned his head to Derek, speaking quietly over the noise of the vehicle and the wind, so that Derek would hear him, but not Sergei.

“Thank you for doing this.”

“I told you-.” Derek began, but Isaac spoke over him.

“I know, but still...I don’t know what I would have done if Stiles hadn’t offered, and I know that you must have been consulted.”

Derek chuckled. As in the hospital, the look of happiness on his face made him seem less threatening. “Actually, he began spouting off a string of threats before he even told me what it was he wanted. The moment he said that a friend needed help, though, I knew that I’d accept.”

“And we’re not putting you out or anything? Stiles would never admit to it if we were.”

“No. I might have been...less than enthused two years ago when we had just gotten married, but it will be nice to have one of Stiles’ friends over, to see him happy, again. Scott has been deadly busy working at Whittemore’s firm, I think Stiles misses the company.”

“And Sergei?” Isaac asked, wanting to make it clear that Isaac and Sergei were an all or nothing kind of thing. They were a packaged deal.

“Sergei isn’t going to pose any problem. I know I can seem...rough, but I promise, I’m really glad that we were able to pull you out from where you were. Stiles said things were bad.”

“Bad is a little bit of an understatement.” Isaac explained. “It was...a catastrophe.”

“Well, being hungry can feel like the end of the world.”

“No, Derek. It wasn’t being hungry. It was the terror that *he’d* have to go hungry, that he’d have to go without hot water or a roof. I can handle it, I have before, but...from the moment I first held him in my arms, I had to provide for him. Failure was not an option, no matter how hard it pressed against me.”

It was perhaps a little odd that Derek was the man that Isaac was being so candid with. He didn’t know the man from Adam, and yet, it still felt good to get things off of his chest.

“From what Stiles said, you did a pretty good job, though. He’s seven, right?”

Isaac nodded.

“Then you survived on your own for seven years. I’m not an expert of anything, but that’s pretty frakking admirable in my book.”

Isaac chuckled. “Thank you.”

Notes for the Chapter:

Translations:

'On bol'shoy strashno, papa.' 'He's big and Scary, papa.'

'Chto ‘nefarious’ v vidu' 'What does nefarious mean?'

'Um...Eto oznachayet, ozornoy . No Derek byl tol'ko shutil' 'It means...sneaky, but Derek was only joking'

'On ne pokhozha on shutit, chto chasto.' He doesn't look like he jokes that often'

'Ne imeyu v vidu.' 'Do not be mean'

Irene, Goodnight is a song that is covered in the game Bioshock Infinite, I absolutely love the game, and suggest you look up that version of the song.

Frak is a cuss word that you'll see a lot of. It's from Battlestar Galactica, and I use it as an alternative so that Sergei doesn't pick up real bad words. I do the same about my nephew.

Thank you for the few people who are following/liking/kudosing this one. Another chapter in a few days.

7. The Letter

Summary for the Chapter:

Stiles and Derek have a surprise for Isaac.

Isaac

Isaac might have had a short heart-to-heart with Derek, but that didn't mean that he would ever claim to 'know' the man very well. Still, it was obvious to tell that it had been Derek's influence more than Stiles for their house. There was a level of the Modern Architecture style that Isaac could handle without wanting to vomit, but whoever had designed their house had done so marvelously.

The first word that came to Isaac's mind was: boxes. The house was a series of six 'boxes' two each of stone, black plaster, and glass, all seemingly melded together and resting on a level of hardwood, making it two stories tall. Several balconies wrapped themselves around the outside of what Isaac had to assume were rooms, while soft light spilled from the glass sections onto the immaculate lawn.

Isaac let out a whistle. Perhaps it was the squalor he had been living in, or the fact the house was truly remarkable, but Isaac was impressed.

"That's...wow." He said while Stiles pulled into the garage that sat beneath the main structure of the house.

"It was all Derek...the house, at least. I was...iffy on it at first, but it's grown on me."

"You're an architect?" Isaac asked, turning to Derek who nodded.

"I wasn't going to be originally, I wanted to be a cartoonist, but in my first drawing class, my professor brought up how much he liked a house I had been doodling, and encouraged me to seek a profession in architecture." Derek explained while Isaac picked Sergei up from the front seat and placed him on the concrete.

"Well, this certainly is amazing, and..." Isaac's sentence fell as he was struck by

the contrast of the outside and the inside of the house. If Derek was present in the solemn grace in the design, Stiles was even more evident in the interior.

Structured chaos. It was the only way to describe what Isaac was seeing. The garage had led them directly into the kitchen, where there was not a single dirty dish, but the clean ones weren't really put away, either. Chrome pots and pans were scattered over the flattop range, mixing bowls were sitting on the marble counter, and unless Isaac was mistaken, their wineglasses were placed directly below the nook in the top of the cabinet meant to hold them.

But that was just the beginning. Someone, (Isaac could easily guess who) had painted the kitchen wall a bright blue, it was almost blinding when Isaac stared at it, though he could only see small patches because Stiles had hung up a multitude a posters. Everything from Star Trek: Voyager, The Avengers, Assassin's Creed, South Park, and even the Powerpuff Girls was covered. The multitude of Stiles' interests had coated the walls like a teenager's room, and Isaac found himself smile at the feeling it caused in his chest. He felt young, again, and despite being in a house that wasn't his, it felt like...home.

"Stiles, this is frakking *awesome*." Isaac breathed. Even Sergei couldn't hide his smile as he took the room in.

"This doesn't look an adult house, I like it." Sergei concurred, in English.

Stiles flashed them both a wide grin. "Oh, this is just the kitchen. When I let Derek design our house, I told him that I'd get to decorate."

"And he took to it with gusto." Derek added, though with a smile.

"You love our nerd den, admit it." Stiles said, elbowing him in the side as he bit his lip.

"I...do." Derek said, hamming it up a bit to make it sound as though he was agreeing to his own execution.

"I knew it!" Stiles cheered, triumphantly, jumping on Derek's back.

Isaac smiled at them, but inside he felt a little uncomfortable. It wasn't the ease with which they showed their affection, but rather, he felt out of place. Isaac cleared his throat and shuffled on his feet. Stiles looked up, still smiling.

“Sorry, let me show you to your room.” Stiles said, hopping down, Derek nudged him in the shoulder.

“Don’t forget the thing.” He muttered.

“I was going to wait until a little later, after he settles in.” Stiles replied, pointedly.

“There’s a thing?” Isaac asked, raising his eyebrow.

“Oh, just...a thing...frakking...frak, Der, I was going to wait.” Stiles whined. Isaac, being completely nonplussed just chuckled at the way that their energies flowed. Isaac never would have expected it, but they really were a good match together, and Derek smiled a lot more when Stiles was making his jokes.

Stiles sighed. “Okay, so...we kind of need to have a chat, Isaac.”

Isaac had expected this, and he was ready. He wasn’t going to be a freeloader, and he knew that Stiles was probably going to tell him that he needed to find a job. He wasn’t irked in the slightest, he had planned on paying his way as soon as he could.

“Here.” Stiles said, handing him a sealed envelope. It was perhaps natural that there was a Batman sticker on it, but only in this household.

Isaac slid his finger under the flap, feeling a little on the spot as Derek, Stiles, and Sergei were watching him. When the envelope opened, the first thing that fell out was a blue credit card, leaving Isaac thoroughly confused as Sergei picked it up, inspected it for a moment, and then handed it to him.

“What...?” Isaac began, but Stiles quickly flapped his arms.

“Read the letter, it makes all of this a lot less awkward, I swear.” He said, bouncing in place.

Isaac quirked an eyebrow, but complied. In Stiles’ messy handwriting was a message:

So, here’s the thing. I know your first instinct will be to reject, but I really need you to just take this, okay? It’s obviously a credit card, but I want you to use this

as kind of the first step to getting you and Sergey settled. I swear, I'm not trying to make you feel embarrassed or anything, I'm not trying to say that we have more than you, I'm just trying to help you. When I got your call, I've never been so scared in my life. You, me, and Scott were the Three Musketeers in high school, and now one of our own is hurting. This is simply a gesture from a friend.

We're here for you,

Stiles

Isaac didn't even realize that he was crying until the ink smudged on the paper. His hand was clenched tightly around the card. He didn't know whether he felt offended or touched, all he knew is that he felt *something*, and it was fucking painful.

Sergei's hand came up to touch his, making Isaac jump.

"Papa, ty v poryadke?"

Isaac was sobbing, but he nodded for his son's sake. Stiles and Derek were both staring at him as though they had made a terrible mistake, and Isaac needed a moment to think.

"Can I...bathroom?" He asked. Stiles pointed to a door in the hallway leading from the kitchen and Isaac moved towards it with Sergei in tow. When he got there, he barely noticed the theme of X-Men for the bathroom before shutting the door in Stiles' worried face and falling to his knees, pulling Sergei into a tight hug as he sobbed.

"I love you, son." He cried into his son's ear.

"I love you, too, papa, but what's wrong?"

"I just..." Isaac couldn't even answer the question, because he wasn't even sure himself.

It took him a moment to calm down enough to look down at the card, again. It was something so simple, just a piece of plastic, but at the same time it was everything. It was a gesture of goodwill and one of absolute pity. It was Stiles

offering them the tools to build a new life when he had already given them a base in the form of lodging. A part of Isaac felt repulsed by it, his pride screaming at him to take it and throw it back in Stiles' face. Another part of him was filled with relief such as he had never known before. Isaac had never been presented with such an opportunity, and if any deserved it, it was Sergei. Sergei deserved the world, and the little bit of plastic might not have been able to buy it, but it would certainly be a start. Finally, Isaac knew that if the roles were reversed and he had the ability to help Stiles, he would have done it in a heartbeat, and though it was yet another blow to his already wounded and bruised pride, he realized that Stiles was only trying to care for him.

So why was he rejecting it? Why couldn't he accept a gift the same way that he'd be willing to give it?

And then he looked up at Sergei and Sergei looked back at him, his own eyes filling with tears at Isaac's lack of communication, but Isaac just placed a kiss to the side of his cheek.

"I'm okay, son. I'm sorry I broke down like that. I just..."

"You keep crying around him, I don't like it." Sergei said, his voice breaking the smallest amount, which, in turn, made Isaac's heart break.

"It's not his fault, though. It's just...a lot of bad things finally hitting your dad at the same time. I'm not...Sergei, I'm not perfect."

"Yes you are, papa." Sergei said, defiantly. "You're the best father in the whole world."

Isaac let out a dry snort. "No...I'm really not. Not yet. But Stiles just...what he's doing for me...It's going to let me be a good father to you for the first time, and I'm just...so happy that I'm going to be able to finally give you something good, something that you deserve. But it also scares me a little, because I haven't been able to do it before, and it's a little overwhelming."

Sergei was still frowning, though. "You're not a bad father. Don't say that. Did Stiles tell you that you were?"

"No, son, you've got to stop looking for reasons to hate them. Stiles and Derek are being unbelievably generous to us."

“Then why do you feel like you’re bad? I love you, papa.”

“I love you, too, son, but the way we were living wasn’t good. I was trying my hardest, you should have had more. I should have...” Isaac broke off into another sob. There had been so much that he had wanted to give Sergei, so much he still did that he felt like he had failed, and yet Sergei was standing there admonishing him for thinking such dark thoughts.

“I’m grateful for you Sergei, you’re such an amazing kid, but the life we were living wasn’t normal. I mean...Sergei, you’ve wanted things, and I haven’t been able to provide them.”

“But that’s okay. I understand, papa, because we had each other.”

“Things are going to change now though, and *that’s* why I was crying. I’ve never had the option to do for you what I’m going to be able to, now, and honestly, it’s a little overwhelming.”

“So, I can have Lucky Charms?” And the fact that the first thing his son asked for was a *cereal* made Isaac begin to laugh, though when his lungs tickled and he coughed, he desisted.

“You’re pretty amazing, Seryozha, have I told you that?”

“Not today.” Sergei said, smiling.

“Well, you are. I’m pretty darn lucky to have you for a son.”

“And I’m pretty darn lucky to have you for my papa.”

Notes for the Chapter:

Derek and Stiles and ensuring that Isaac will be okay, and I think that's pretty sweet.

We're moving, but I'm working really hard on my papers, so I don't know when I'll be able to upload another chapter for my other fic. This one is really far ahead. I promise to try, though.

8. Warming

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac reassures Sergei and Stiles learns that there might be some light at the end of their tunnel.

Notes for the Chapter:

IMPORTANT NOTE BELOW!!

Chapter Eight

Isaac

When Isaac exited the bathroom it was with an apologetic smile and a bashful grin. He felt more than a little embarrassed at his actions.

Derek and Stiles were sitting at their breakfast bar, magazine in front of them as though they hadn't been waiting for him to figure out whatever the hell it was that Isaac had needed to figure out. When they saw him, though, they both got up, and Stiles' face was fraught with nerves.

"So...that was a thing and I apologize." Isaac said, quietly.

"Are you alright? I didn't like...hurt your feelings, did I. I swear that wasn't what I was trying to do, I just wanted you to-."

"Stiles!" Isaac shouted over Stiles' ramblings, though a chuckle. "I'm alright, I just...needed a minute. I...Stiles, this is..." Isaac said, holding up the credit card.

"Too much? We just wanted you to have a real fresh start."

"A house alone isn't enough." Derek agreed, nodding.

"Yeah, but...this is...kind of a lot. And I'm...not too good at accepting things."

"Oh, you mean like how I practically beg you to come back home?"

“You know the word ‘practically’ means that you didn’t actually do it, right? You’ve been asking me to come back for seven months.”

“Which is why I was officially diagnosed as ‘annoying’. It worked though, didn’t it?”

“It did.” Isaac said with a chuckle. “Eventually.”

For an awkward moment they stood there, before Stiles ran forward and embraced Isaac again, though this time there were no tears on Isaac’s part.

Isaac used the opportunity to place his lips near Stiles’ ear.

“You really have no idea what this means to me. *Thank you.*” He whispered.

“Just helping out a friend.”

“All for one and one for all, eh?” Isaac asked with a chuckle, while Stiles nodded.

They remained like that for a moment, with Derek and Sergei both being patient though with distinct looks of jealousy before they parted.

“So, no arguments?” Stiles asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Only that one day, even if it’s on my death bed, I’m paying you back.”

“You have a deal, but not before you’re capable, alright?”

Isaac nodded. He could work with that. It wasn’t as though he was going to jeopardize his son by insisting on giving back money that he didn’t have.

“Papa, Ya dolzhen popisat'.”

“Why didn’t you go when we were in there?” Isaac asked with a chuckle. “Go on, I’ll be right here.” Sergei looked hesitant, but after a moment, ran inside the room they had just vacated.

“Isaac, he’s really adorable, even if he hates us.” Stiles said.

“He doesn’t hate you.” Isaac said, quickly. Derek raised a disbelieving eyebrow.

“Come on, I mean, it’s okay, I get it, but he won’t even speak English around us, I think that it’s safe to say that he doesn’t like us very much.”

Isaac shook his head. “It’s not that, it’s just...it’s always been us, you know? Because of...shall we say less than fortuitous circumstances, he’s always been something of an outcast. I tried to set him up for play dates and stuff, but...I just couldn’t because I was always working.” Isaac paused he realized that he was getting off topic. “Sorry, anyway, he’s formed a strong bond with me, and he’s wary of strangers. Plus...” Isaac hesitated and bit his lip.

“He thinks that you’re scary,” Stiles said, patting Derek’s chest, when Derek’s eyes registered hurt, Stiles let out a laugh, “get over it, you’re kind of intimidating, and I figure there’s something with me, but I’m not sure.”

Stiles’ candidness made Isaac nod. “He thinks that you like me.”

Stiles’ eyes drifted towards the ceiling as though he was picturing it which made Isaac blush.

“Sorry, but it’s just not...I mean, you’re...” his eyes glanced to Derek who rolled his eyes. “But, I’m married.”

“I know, I told him that, that we’re just friends, but it’s not like I’ve had the time or money to go out and date people. He’s...I’d say one of my biggest mistakes is the fact that he doesn’t know what a healthy relationship looks like.”

“There hasn’t been anyone?” Stiles asked as the sound of a toilet flushing came into the room and Sergei came back in. Isaac shook his head, he’d finish the conversation, later, but he really didn’t want Isaac to know the sparse human contact that Isaac had had over the years, it might ruin his ideal of relationships, even more.

Stiles eyes were burning in curiosity, but it was Derek who ended the line of questioning...for the moment.

“Sergei,” Sergei jumped when Derek spoke his name, but turned to him, anyway.

“We knew you guys were coming, so we waited to do grocery shopping until you got here. Do you want to go with us and pick out some things?”

“What?” Isaac asked, feeling shocked that Derek had proposed such a thing. It wasn’t that he felt offended, it was that he had assumed that at the very least Derek would want for them to be roommates, and draw the line at that. That he was offering, in the first hour to take Sergei to the store when they had *already* given him a credit card was shocking.

“Is that...am I overstepping?” Derek asked, looking regretful.

“No, it’s just...I expected...I don’t know what I expected, a general wave towards our room and a classified ad on the bed?”

“I can’t imagine doing such a thing to the friend of my husband. You’re here, you’re one of us. You don’t have to go, though...if you or Sergei are uncomfortable.”

Isaac smiled at the kindness that Derek was showing, it was far more than he had expected, and perhaps that was a problem he had. He was back home with his best friend and his husband, and maybe it was time to start trusting that the world wouldn’t always be cruel to him and his son. He turned to Sergei.

“Do you want to go or stay here?”

Sergei’s face crashed, immediately. “Papa, pozhaluysta, ne delayte mne ostat'sya zdes' odin!” He begged, rushing forward, and wrapping his arms around his waist.

“Whoa, whoa, Seryozha, I’m not leaving you here.” He said, rubbing the top of Sergei’s head. “I meant that if you want to stay here, I’ll stay here with you.”

Sergei looked up at him. “Vy ne pokidayet menya tol'ko potomu, chto vash s druz'yami?” He asked, sounding terrified.

“Seryozha, I will never leave you, never abandon you as long as I live. What happened yesterday was a mistake and I’m truly sorry for that, but I’m going to be right here for you, always, okay?”

Sergei nodded, and Isaac gave him a tight hug, feeling even guiltier than he had before. Sergei depended on him for everything from food to feelings of security and Isaac had stumbled in his duty by allowing himself to be taken to the hospital.

“Do tekhn por, kak ya mogu ostat'sya s toboy, ya khochu poyti v magazin.” Sergei said, making Isaac chuckle at his bravery.

“Alright, he wants to go to the store.”

“Awesome.” Derek said with a wide smile, once again disarming most, if not all, of his unapproachable nature.

“We can drop you off at your car when we’re done.” Stiles added.

“Sounds like a plan.” Isaac said, nodding.

Stiles

Stiles wasn’t sure if things were working. He had only spent a few hours in Sergei’s company, and there wasn’t much he would do, except withdraw into himself if it didn’t, but it seemed that Sergei had some serious problems with him and Derek.

From what his father had told him, Sergei had been guarded with Parrish, and yet, had come to trust him. Parrish had been boasting about it, according to John, proud that he had been able to assuage the child’s fears with Skittles and censored war stories. Stiles may not have given Sergei candy, yet, but his feelings were a tiny bit bruised that Sergei had not opened up to him yet.

He resolved to work harder towards forging an amicable relationship with the seven year-old. If their lives were going to be peaceful, he needed Sergei to trust him, and he needed him to understand that he truly only had Isaac’s best interests at heart.

Stiles had been heartbroken when Isaac had moved to Chicago, but had accepted it because for one thing, it really wasn’t *his* decision, and for another, he was actually really proud that Isaac had been accepted at the University of Chicago. Stiles had been forced to watch from a distance as all of Isaac’s goodwill and hope began to spiral downwards towards a fiery crash.

He had stayed up on the phone with him when Isaac called, crying so hard that he could hardly breathe when Natasha had gotten pregnant. He had been so

frightened as to what his future would bring, and Stiles hadn't been able to offer much comfort except to cry with him.

From there, calls became sporadic, and then...stopped coming at all as Isaac's financial woes became more and more severe. Then had come the silence. For nearly six years, Stiles didn't hear from Isaac, had no way of knowing whether or not his friend was alive. Stiles would never admit it to Isaac, but every night for six years he had stopped by the local church in town in order to pray for Isaac. It wasn't that he was particularly religious, but it made him feel better seeing as there was nothing else he could do.

Once he had found Derek and his job, though, new opportunities presented themselves. Stiles had hired a private investigator in order to track Isaac down, if only to find out if he was dead, but the report he received was so much more than Stiles had expected.

Isaac was extremely negative about the life he had lived in Chicago after Sergei was born. He made self-deprecating comments and looked at the ground in shame at what he perceived to be his faults at raising him, but Stiles wasn't like that. When Stiles looked at Isaac, he felt a swelling of pride within him at what his friend had done. Perhaps it had been his own experiences growing up, but when he saw the single father who had struggled, but survived, he was very pleased to count himself among Isaac's friends.

Isaac had suffered hardship, and career wise had not formed much of a base, but that didn't mean that Stiles as though he was to be admonished. His own father had had a good job when Stiles had been born and still struggled. Isaac had done the same without a good job, and for that, had Stiles' admiration and respect. He in no way viewed Isaac's current situation as a detraction of his character, and Stiles vowed to make sure Isaac understood that.

When Isaac loaded Sergei into the back of Derek's car (Derek had insisted on taking the vehicle with side airbags), Stiles stopped him from getting in by placing a hand on his shoulder.

"I'm really glad that you're here, man."

Isaac's face broke into a smile. "Me, too. I just...He'll warm up to you, just give him some time?" He sounded worried as though Stiles might boot him from their home because Sergei had a few minor trust issues.

“As much time as he needs. This is your home now, too, and I just want him to be comfortable, and hey, him choosing to go with us is a good sign, right?”

Isaac blinked at Stiles, his smile fading a bit. “My home?” He asked, quietly.

“Of course. You’re not a pet or a refugee.”

A snort from Isaac, though it had a bit of a wheeze to it. “It’s funny that you mentioned that. When we were leaving Chicago, I kind of felt like I was fleeing.”

“Well, you’re a roommate with special privileges, now. That card is for you and Sergei to get clothes, toys, and games, whatever.”

“And groceries.” Isaac added, but Stiles shook his head.

“Dude, we’re going to be there together, might as well just use one payment.”

“Stiles, no, I mean...this is-.” Isaac began to protest, but Stiles gave out a sigh of mock exasperation.

“I’m not going to sit here and listen to you object. If it makes you feel better, you can make dinner tonight.

Isaac looked like he was going to argue, again, but Stiles gave him a stern look, and nodded. “I’ve never been able to do this for him, even though he rarely says anything, I bet he has more than a few requests to make when we get there.”

“Anything he wants, Isaac.” Stiles said, feeling relieved that he was finally able to do something to help.

Notes for the Chapter:

Translations:

Papa, Ya dolzhen popisat'. = Papa, I have to pee.

Papa, pozhaluysta, ne delayte mne ostat'sya zdes' odin! = Papa, please do not make me stay here alone!

Vy ne pokidayet menya tol'ko potomu, chto vash s druz'yami? = You won't

leave me for your friends (or as close to this as I could get.)
Do tekhnicheskuyu, kak ya mogu ostat'sya s toboy, ya khochu poyti v magazin =
As long as I can stay with you, I would like to go to the store.

Alright, so because of school papers, I might not make my weekly deadline on Beneath the Claws and Fangs and I am truly sorry, I hope that you'll accept this chapter as a peace offering.

Thank you for all the kudos and comments on both.

9. A Word

Summary for the Chapter:

A trip to the grocery store yields something good and something bad.

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything

Isaac

It was something of a weird sensation to view a grocery store as a source of joy rather than embarrassment. Isaac was used to walking in, heading straight for the cheapest food he could afford, and leaving with his head ducked in indignity.

With his new arrangement, though, Isaac actually had the resources to get a *cart*. And the fact that he was excited about a fucking cart was a sign of how bad things had gotten. Isaac was still a little uncomfortable about accepting even more aid from Derek and Stiles, but when he reached for his own cart, Derek stopped him with a shake of the head. By mixing their food the two were preventing Isaac from doing what his pride told him to do.

He agreed, though, because the look on Sergei's face at the prospect was one that warmed the very core of Isaac's soul.

He was still a little lost, though. He felt as though if he grabbed everything that came in sight, he might seem greedy, but there was a few things that made his stomach give an interested rumble.

"So, Sergei, what do you want?" Derek asked.

Sergei looked a little nervous, his eyes shifting to Isaac who nodded encouragingly, before he spoke...in English. It was a moment that made Isaac's heart unclench a little.

"Can I have some Lucky Charms?" He asked.

"You can have absolutely anything you want, okay? Whatever you see that

might be good, grab it, if it's not Stiles will eat it."

"Says the man who ate calamari." Stiles grumbled.

"Derek, what's calamari?"

All three of them were silent for a moment, shocked that Sergei had asked a *Derek* a question of his own volition.

"It's...uh squid, Sergei. Some people don't like it, though."

Sergei made a face showing his disgust, before turning to Isaac. "Oni sobirayutsya , chtoby zastavit' menya yest' kal'mara?"

It was Stiles who laughed and answered, though.

"No, Sergei, no one is going to make you eat calamari. You can eat whatever you want."

"No ramen." Sergei said, quickly. Isaac's face turned up in a smile, he was so happy that his son had actual options, but it quickly died when Sergei's own fell. "Mne ochen' zhal', papa."

"What are you sorry for?" Isaac asked, while Stiles and Derek's eyes darkened as though they knew what he was going to say. Sergei sniffed, his eyes downcast as he explained:

"Vy uporno trudilis', chtoby menya kormit'. Ya ne pytayus' byt' neblagodarnym."

"No, Seryozha, it's not ungrateful to be sick of ramen, I'm sick of it, too." Isaac said, attempting a smile and tickling Sergei's ribs to make him laugh.

"Papa, stop it!"

"What is your problem?" Stiles asked, abruptly, making Isaac jump. For a moment, he thought Stiles was admonishing him for tickling Sergei, until he noticed Stiles' eyes were fixated over his shoulder.

Isaac spun around, but saw nothing but a row of bread, holding Sergei closer, he turned back to Stiles.

“What’s wrong?” Isaac asked, feeling the uncomfortable prickle of a father’s instincts. He didn’t like the cold look in Stiles’ eyes, it made him feel unsafe, as though there had been a genuine threat.

“There was a guy over there staring at you. It was...creepsville.”

“Stiles, it was probably just someone who’s uncomfortable seeing a kid with three grown men. This is still a small town, even if it’s in California.” Derek said, putting a hand on Stiles’ shoulder. “He thinks the dentist had a thing for me.”

“First off, she does, and second off this isn’t a joke, Der. I got really bad vibes from him.”

Isaac hadn’t even seen the man, but was erring on the side of Stiles. He felt the same feeling of unease at the thought of someone watching him and his son.

“Well, let’s be safe and get this trip over with.” Derek said, noticing the look on Isaac’s face.

“If you see him again, let me know? It could have been nothing, but...I’d rather be safe than sorry.” Isaac said, fighting off a shiver of fear, but when he looked down to see Sergei looking worried, he smiled. “First stop: Lucky Charms!” He shouted, lifting Sergei into the cart. He would feel a little better knowing that Sergei was in sight at all times.

It was easy to forget, though. Though they kept their eyes peeled, the man didn’t show himself, again, but there was plenty of things to be excited about. There were foods that Isaac had not had in a long time thrown into the cart, a few new ones that he had missed. Sergei’s reaction to finding out that there were *chocolate* Lucky Charms was something that Isaac would keep with him for a long time.

The rest of the trip was spent with Isaac’s fear slowly easing back like low tide moving out. There was a slight (read: very real) possibility that he might have overreacted. His eyes remained sharp, searching out for threats, but it seemed that there was nothing to be found. And Sergei’s attitude was especially contagious. He spoke in English about half the time, and didn’t avoid Derek or Stiles’ questions.

“What’s your favorite thing to do with your papa?” Derek asked as they went down the cracker aisle.

“Well...Once, when I was little, papa took me to the zoo and that was really fun.”

Isaac remembered that day with a pang. It had been one of the few times that Isaac had splurged for Sergei. Usually, they just went to a park...or played hide in seek in the apartment, because Isaac hadn’t been able to afford to take any time off of work.

“But usually, we went to the park.” Sergei said, mimicking Isaac’s thoughts. “Those were the best. He would chase me around acting like a...like a...” Sergei sighed and turned to Isaac. “Papa, what is ‘oboroten’ in English?”

“Werewolf.” Isaac said with a small smile.

“Yeah, papa would chase me around like he was a werewolf, because sometimes we went to the park at night.”

“Sounds like a good time.” Derek said with a chuckle. “We have a park here, but we don’t have a zoo, we’d have to go out of town, but that’s definitely something that can be arranged.”

Sergei gasped. “Really? Papa, can we really go?”

Isaac nodded. “Of course.” He said with a smile. Options. He had them now. And that was pretty fucking awesome.

They headed to the checkout with a cart near to bursting with vegetables, candy, cookies, soda, meat, and, of course, six boxes of Lucky Charms and a seven year old who was standing in the middle of their hoard like a dragon guarding treasure.

“I want to help!” He demanded, and Stiles nodded, though he had to bite down a smile when Sergei began loading the conveyor belt in the most obtuse manner possible. Isaac and Derek chuckled, but allowed him to carry on.

“Isaac, is that you?” Isaac jumped nearly a foot in the air for the second time that day as he spun around to see Deputy Parrish standing there with a cart. It took

him a second to realize who it was, though. A tight grey shirt with a graphic of *Pikachu*, loose baggy jeans, and a pair of converse had been the last thing he was expecting the deputy law enforcer in Beacon Hills to be wearing, and the effect was rather hilarious. Isaac had to admit that the shirt made the man's eyes pop, though.

He may have disagreed about Parrish taking his son without his consent, but only an idiot would have called the man unattractive.

Considering that Isaac had yelled at Parrish the last time he saw him, he felt a little uncomfortable, even though he smiled.

"Uh...hi, Deputy." He said, quietly.

"Hi Mr. Parrish!" Sergei shouted, the exact opposite of Isaac. It drew Isaac's confusion that his son was so willing to be kind to the deputy when it had taken so much time just to get him to hold a conversation with Stiles and Derek. They didn't seem bothered by it as they smiled and waved, continuing the job that Sergei had abandoned.

"Hey, Seryozha, how are you?"

"About to be a sugar craze of his life is what he is." Isaac said, eyeing his son.

"I got Lucky Charms and candy and brownies!"

"Wow! Maybe I'll have to borrow your papa for a while." Parrish asked, excitedly, his attitude seeming a hundred percent genuine, even if he was joking.

Isaac didn't realize anything was wrong until he heard Sergei's voice.

"He's my papa." Sergei said, darkly, his attitude turning on a dime, immediately. "You can't have him."

"Sergei, mind your manners." Isaac said, quickly. "He wasn't being serious."

"I really wasn't, I'm sorry, Seryozha, I didn't mean to frighten you." Parrish said, looking more than a little guilty.

"You don't have to apologize, Deputy, he's just...protective."

“I understand, and please, call me Jordan.” Parrish said.

“Sorry...I, I must have missed your name, earlier. I guess we didn’t exactly meet so much as one of us yelled and the other.” Isaac said, spinning Sergei around so that he could help Derek and Stiles with unloading the cart and so that he would stop glaring at Jordan.

“Well, in that case...” Jordan held out his hand, and Isaac, after hesitating for a moment, took it. “Jordan Parrish, Deputy Sheriff of Beacon Hills, at your service.”

Isaac ignored the slight warmth that spread through his body at Jordan’s grin and his hand wrapping around his own. Strong, yet not dominating. Calloused, and yet soft. Isaac wasn’t sure if handshakes were supposed to be enjoyed, but no one had to know if they were.

“Isaac Lahey, Beacon Hills’ unemployed prodigal son.” Isaac said while Jordan grinned. “And of course, you already know Sergei, and probably Stiles and Derek.”

“I certainly do, and Stiles knows exactly what I’m going to say.”

“Yeah, yeah, reregister my jeep, I know.” Stiles muttered, placing pork chops on the belt.

“So, I haven’t finished shopping, yet, so I’ll leave you guys alone, but hopefully, I’ll see you around. Dasvidanya” Jordan said with a wave, backing his cart up and heading down an aisle.

The man was certainly kind, but he was also an oddity.

“So, have I reached the breaking point in my mental capacity, or was he wearing what I think he was wearing?” Isaac asked, turning back to Derek and Stiles, both of whom were looking at him oddly. “What?” He asked, feeling a little defensive.

Stiles and Derek shared a look that said that they knew something that he didn’t, before Derek shook his head.

“Nothing and no, it wasn’t your imagination. Jordan is a nerd that could give

Stiles a run for his money.”

“I resent that!” Stiles protested. “I am the king of nerds in Beacon Hills.”

Isaac chuckled and Derek kissed the side of Stiles’ head. “No matter what happens, you’re certainly the king of nerds in our household.”

“It was a little disconcerting, I mean, if I remember, your dad wore his uniform even on his days off.”

“Not always, but I see your point.” Stiles said, nodding.

“And...he’s not Russian is he?”

Stiles shook his head, that mysterious look coming back to his eyes. Isaac ignored that and instead focused on Parrish’s use of a Russian word to say goodbye. It was a sweet gesture, but Sergei didn’t seem placated by it. He was scowling even as he licked his lips as the various amounts of junk food they had bought.

“You okay, Seryozha?”

He shook his head and threw rather than placed a bag of chips onto the conveyor belt.

“Sergei, don’t throw things and tell me what’s wrong.” Isaac commanded.

“He tried to take you away, I thought he was nice, but he was only trying to take you away.”

“Sergei, he really wasn’t, it was a joke, that’s it. I get that you love me, and that’s pretty great, because you’re my everything, but people are going to want to spend time with me.”

“But...people didn’t try to steal you in Chicago.” Sergei argued.

“We’re not trying to steal your father, but you’ve had friends, right?” Stiles asked.

Sergei nodded. Isaac knew he hadn’t had too many, but his son had not grown up

completely socially defunct.

“Well, adults need friends, too. That’s all we are, no one is going to take your papa away, I promise.”

Sergei mulled it over for a moment before holding his pinky out to Stiles. “Pinky promise?”

Without missing a beat, laughing, or mocking Sergei, Stiles wrapped his own pinky around Sergei’s and shook it.

“I promise.”

Serge turned to Isaac, his eyes downcast as though he expected punishment. But Isaac simply pulled him into a hug, the cold metal of the cart provided a small barrier, but he still got his point across.

Isaac wasn’t sure, but he thought that perhaps Sergei was confused because Isaac hadn’t had very many friends in Chicago, and the ones he did have were only related to work. He didn’t go out to have drinks or sing karaoke, he came straight home and tried to spend as much time with Sergei as he could, checked his homework, or read to him.

Notes for the Chapter:

Translations:

Mne ochen' zhal', papa. = 'I'm sorry, papa'

'Oni sobirayutsya , chtoby zastavit' menya yest' kal'mara' 'Are they going to make me eat squid?'

'Vy uporno trudilis', chtoby menya kormit'. Ya ne pytayus' byt' neblagodarnym.' = 'You worked hard to feed me. I'm not trying to be ungrateful.'

So this is Sergei building a relationship with Stiles and Derek and the first hints of something darker coming to threaten their happiness.

Don't ask me why Sergei is obsessed with Lucky Charms, it was a random choice.

10. Five-Hundred Dollar Sweater

Summary for the Chapter:

Stiles reminds Sergei that he'll never leave, and takes him shopping.

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything.

Isaac

Derek had dropped Isaac off at his car so that he could head to their house in his own vehicle and Isaac decided to use the time to make a new set of rules for their lives. Isaac followed Derek, who had wanted to be close by in case Isaac's car had trouble.

He loved his son, absolutely without qualms or conditions, but now that Sergei wasn't going to have to be as reliant on him, he wanted to set a precedent for more independence. He didn't want Sergei to grow up and live the stigma and humiliation of one who had refused to let their father's go. Isaac also knew that before Sergei would feel comfortable living his own life from time to time, he had do it first, to show that the sky wouldn't fall upon them if they spent time apart from one another.

"Seryozha, we need to talk." Isaac said as he backed out of the parking spot.

"Yes, papa." Sergei said, his eyes turning to Isaac.

"Things are different, now. Some of the changes are good. I'm going to be able to afford new things for you, when you go to school this year, you're going to have a brand new wardrobe, and no one will make fun of you. Some of the changes, though, you're not going to like...I know it's different because before I was working two jobs, but now that we're living with Stiles and Derek, I can have friends. We might hang out, we might talk, and sometimes...sometimes, Sergei it won't always be with you."

Sergei's face morphed into one of devastation, and Isaac tried to quickly sooth him. His eyes fell to his lap.

“Sergei, I promised you, didn’t I? And I’m doing it again, right now, I swear on my life that I will never, look at me, *never* leave you. You’re my son, and to other people that may not mean very much, but to me that’s the thing that matters first and foremost. You’ll always be the first thing that I consider. Do you understand that?”

“You’ll always be here?”

“Always, Seryozha. But people have friends, and now that we’re here, you’ll probably make more, and you’ll spend time with them without me, it’s part of growing up.”

“I don’t think I like growing up.” Sergei said with a pout.

“This is *one* bad thing about it, Seryozha. Life is pretty awesome, even if I haven’t-.”

“Papa.” Sergei’s voice began, all at once firm. “I’ve had a pretty great life, and if you keep saying that you’re a bad papa, I...I won’t ever speak to you again.”

The hesitation in the last part is what made Isaac seriously think that his son might be serious. Of course ‘ever again’ in this case might mean a day or two, but it was still something that was obviously important to Sergei. Isaac really had no choice but to nod.

“Alright I’m a good papa.”

“The *best* papa.” Sergei corrected.

“Alright, I’m the best papa.” Isaac said, caving in, though he really didn’t feel like it was the truth.

His sole comfort in raising his son was that he had been far better than his own late father. The abusive, sick, and twisted man had been the absolute lowest when it came to people, and that was enough to make Isaac feel at least a little bit better when he compared his son’s life to his own.

“Are you hungry, or could you handle a little shopping?” Isaac asked, wanting to change the topic and also feeling the burn of the credit card in his wallet. He wanted to see his son out of those clothes and in brand new ones, he swore to

himself that he was going to have a bonfire so Sergei would never again have to wear the plaid monstrosity.

“Shopping for what, papa?”

“For clothes.” Normal children usually hated clothes shopping until they hit their teen years and were seeking anything to be independent from their parents, at least, that was Isaac’s understanding, so he took the fact that Sergei’s eyes lit up at the suggestion to be one that his son was less than normal, which was fine by him. Normal was boring and mediocre, Sergei was exceptional, and Isaac had expected nothing less.

“I can have a new shirt?” Sergei asked, and the all-too-familiar clench in his chest returned. Whenever Sergei brought up quantities of the objects that he expected, it always made Isaac’s heart hurt.

“No, Seryozha, you can have as many shirts as you like.” Isaac said, turning on his blinker and waving to catch Derek’s attention.

Derek’s car swerved to the right, off the shoulder, and Isaac pulled up right behind him. Both Stiles and Derek got out before Isaac could even take off his seatbelt, and ran to his window.

“Are you alright?” Derek asked, making Isaac shake his head and chuckle.

“You know, this car got me all the way across the country, just because she’s not pretty doesn’t mean that she’s not reliable.”

“Derek’s just distrusting of any vehicle made before two years ago.” Stiles said, and Isaac liked his friend a little more for the comment.

“I was...if it’s alright, I was going to stop by the mall or something? I wanted to get Sergei some clothes.”

Stiles laughed. “That’s your card now, man, you don’t have to ask. Tell you what, though, let us drop off the food, and then we’ll join you.”

Isaac cursed under his breath at his own slip up, he hadn’t thought about the groceries. It was not in his nature to simply leave the work for Derek and Stiles, especially when they had bought all of it, and half of it was his.

“No, I’ll go with you and help.”

“Isaac, you don’t have-.” Derek began, but Isaac cut him off with a glare.

“Yes. I do. It’s only three, we still have the whole day ahead of us, just...let me do what I need to help?”

Stiles gave him a small, understanding smile, before nodding. “Of course, man. We’ll meet you back at the house, okay?”

Sergei practically exploded out of his seat when they finally arrived at the mall, and Isaac let him have his moment of hyperactivity. It wasn’t as though he had ever been able to get excited about being to a mall before.

Derek and Stiles didn’t seem mind, though. They had all gone together, and had joked and laughed with Sergei. Sergei seemed to have seriously taken Isaac’s words to heart, and though Isaac wasn’t sure if it would last, it certainly made their day a little easier.

“Come on! New clothes!” Sergei shouted, behaving Isaac’s general rules and staying near the car, though bouncing on his feet. Isaac wasn’t as *physically* excited for their trip, but he felt pretty good to know that when they got...home, his son would have food and clothes.

“Yeah, Derek, let’s go!” Stiles said, looking just as energetic as Sergei, causing Isaac to snort as he thought of the potential mistake he might have made placing them both in the same house.

“Are you sure that you can’t walk through dimensional walls?” Derek asked, watching as Sergei and Stiles doing an odd jerky dance together.

“Why’s that?”

“I think you must have fathered Stiles, as well.” Derek had avoided suggesting that Sergei was Stiles’ son with his roundabout way of saying that when Sergei was himself, he shared traits with Stiles, and for that, Isaac was grateful.

“Nah, if you’ve spent any time with Sheriff Stillinski, you know that those two

are practically twins with different levels of hyperactivity. Stiles is John with a sugar high.”

“An ever present sugar high, it’s one of the things that first attracted me to him.” Derek said, his eyes watching Stiles fondly.

“Most people never viewed it as a positive or attractive thing.” Isaac pointed out, remembering the dark days of high school when they had all been picked on, but Stiles had been a special target for his ever flapping mouth and boisterous spirit.

“That’s their mistake. He has a fire, it warms me.” Derek said with a smile and Isaac nearly chuckled at the muscled man making such a sweet comment. It was unexpected, but Isaac wasn’t going to judge, it’s not as though he had much experience with men.

“Papa...Are we going?” Sergei asked, rubbing up to Isaac, taking his hand.

“Of course, of course.”

The mall was bustling with people going about their business, causing Isaac’s protective streak to flare up, though not strongly enough to ruin their time. He wasn’t even sure what Sergei would *want*. He had had his fair share of exposure to pop culture, but it wasn’t as though he had had the ability to properly display an affinity for one T.V. show over another.

Isaac decided that Sergei was at the right age that he could pick out his own clothes. And when he told his son so, Sergei’s eyes lit up as though Christmas had come early, and Isaac supposed that in a way, it had.

Their system was rather simple. Sergei would pick a store that he wanted to try, collect a series of clothes with all three of them helping to find good styles, and Sergei trying them on while Isaac remained directly outside the dressing room.

They actually made a good team. Stiles was great at picking out the shirts that were wild and popular. Everything from Pokémon to Transformers were carefully selected under Stiles’ watch. Derek found more formal clothing, which Isaac could have done, but was having fun seeing his friends getting involved. Isaac kept an eye on Sergei, and imputed his opinion occasionally, but more often than not, vetoed options that he knew Sergei would grow tired of, or ones that were too expensive. He didn’t care how much money Stiles and Derek had

given him, no seven year-old needed a five hundred dollar sweater.

“He looks great in it, like a proper little gentleman.” Derek argued, while Isaac put the offending sweater back.

“We could buy him a complete suit for the same price.”

“But-.” Derek began, but Isaac shook his head.

“You gave *me* the credit card, he’s my son, so I get the final say.”

Derek actually seemed to pout as he muttered under his breath. “Clothing Nazi.”

Sergei wasn’t nearly as interested in socks, but Isaac grabbed a few packs, anyway, he also took charge of buying the shoes, and ended up with a pair of sandals, some Converse, skate shoes, and flip flops for variety.

Sergei gazed longingly at one or two toys, and Isaac promised to buy more than a few of them the next time he had some time alone. He would provide a surprise to make up of seven birthdays and Christmases. It was in Sergei’s nature that he didn’t ask for any of them, and that was what drove Isaac to make the decision to blow some of the money that Stiles and Derek had given him.

In the end, Isaac was glad that Derek and Stiles had come along, until he felt prepared to go. No matter how big Sergei’s closet was, he would have enough clothes to fill it up. As Isaac headed back towards the exit, though, Stiles made an incredulous noise.

“Where are you going?” He asked.

“Uh...home?” Isaac said, his arms laden with bags.

“If Sergei needed new clothes, you definitely do. I’m not sure if I’m right, but I’m guessing he has more clothes than you do.” Stiles said, having moved close enough that he could whisper and not embarrass Isaac, who still blushed at the truth of the words.

“We’re not...I can wait a day or two.”

“You should do it now, papa.” Sergei said. “If I get new clothes, you should,

too.”

Stiles let out a sigh, making Derek smile. It really wasn't fair for them to gang up on him, he had expected at least his son to want to go home. Isaac had little choice but to turn back around and follow Stiles and Derek back towards the stores.

Notes for the Chapter:

No Russian this time, but we're approaching a scene that begins the horror in this story.

This is still my favorite, and I'm hoping more people notice it, but for those of you who are reading it, thank you.

11. Too Perfect

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac gets another chilling revelation from Sergei.

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything

Isaac

It was with arms bursting with bundles of clothes that Isaac was finally introduced to his room. He felt almost weak with tiredness, though he was certainly doing better than he had in days, but he still couldn't help the groan that escaped him as he threw himself onto the bed in the guest room.

It was a rather dull room, though Isaac assumed that that was because it was for guests, and this was confirmed by Stiles as he leaned against the doorframe.

"I wanted you to be able to do anything you wanted to it. When we first moved in, this was going to be an office for me, but...things didn't exactly work that way."

Without moving except his eyes, Isaac's brow furrowed. "What do you mean?"

"I never used this room for anything else. I always had this...I guess you could call it a red alert, right here." He said, tapping his chest. "I felt like you...you might need it one day."

Isaac felt his throat swell at the consideration and ever present worry that Stiles had displayed. It made him feel guilty for having maintained phone silence for so long, and in spite of his protesting body, he sat up, ensuring with a glance that Sergei was still in the bathroom.

"Stiles, that's..."

"I know, it's so frakking rude, right?" Stiles said, surprising Isaac. "I swear, though, I wasn't...I didn't think you would fail, and I still don't think that you

have, but life is hard, and I slept better at night knowing that you'd have a place that you could go if you needed to."

"It's all too much, Stiles. A week ago...I was on the brink of homelessness, and not like...I mean *this* fucking close to my house of cards just crumbling." Isaac said, holding his thumb and forefinger a millimeter apart. "And now... everything you've done, you've saved my life, and far more importantly, you've saved Sergei's life. I can never thank you enough for this."

"Dude, the moment Sergei and I bonded over Adventure Time, all debts were instantly paid in full." Stiles laughed, but Isaac didn't see it as a joking matter.

"They really weren't, and Stiles, I swear-."

Stiles flapped his hands impatiently. "Yeah, yeah, pay me back...whatever, that's not at all what I care about. I do have one last surprise for you, though."

"Stiles, I swear to God-." Isaac began, feeling that the metaphorical hole of debt that he had dug with his friend was already too deep.

"Chill pill, take one." Stiles said, laughing. "This is one that didn't cost anything." Stiles motioned with his head, and with a grunt, Isaac got up to follow him.

Across the hardwood hallway lined with what looked like the framed first editions of several comic book series was another door, which Stiles opened to show another room, empty except for a bed.

"It's...um, nice?" Isaac said, unsure of why Stiles was showing it to him.

"It's for Sergei." Stiles explained.

Isaac was taken aback by the gesture. He had been expecting for him and Sergei to share a room as they often had in the apartment. Too often, Isaac simply crashed on the couch, but Sergei felt safer in their shitty neighborhood when Isaac was closer than that.

"I thought that you gave up an office for my room...Where did this room come from?"

“Well...we have a something of a ‘nerd cave’, it’s where I keep my comics, video games, boxsets of awesome shows, and so on.” Stiles said. “This was Derek’s office, which I ended up just sharing with him, but we temporarily combined it with the game room so Sergei could have his own space.”

“Stiles-.” Isaac began, but in what was fast becoming a trend, Stiles interrupted him.

“Not a word. Isaac, our house is too frakking big as it is, it’s kind of nice that there’s enough people here to fill it.”

“Stiles...” Isaac felt on the verge of tears, again. To hide his eyes in case they fell, he grabbed Stiles and pulled him into a hug. “You’re too kind.”

“Drug poznayotsa v bede.” Stiles said into his ear.

“Papa?” Sergei’s voice drifted down the hall, and Isaac quickly wiped away his tears, lest Sergei think that Stiles was making him cry again.

“We’re in here, Seryozha.” Isaac called. When Sergei entered, his eyes were lidded with confusion.

“I thought we were in the other room.” He said, and Isaac smiled.

“This is yours. Stiles is letting you use this one so you can have your own room.” *For the first time.* Isaac didn’t say.

If Isaac had expected Sergei to be excited that the news, he was sorely disappointed. He shifted nervously and his hands wrapped around his chest in an unconscious display of protection.

“No, papa, chto, yesli ya khochu videt’ tebya ili u menya koshmar?” Sergei asked, his Russian returning in a sign that Isaac immediately recognized as a sign of his insecurity.

“I’m just across the hall, son.” Isaac answered in English, considering that Stiles had probably understood most, if not all of what had been said. “You can come and see me anytime that you feel uncomfortable, okay?”

“And maybe for the first night, you can stay with your papa if that makes you

feel better?” Stiles suggested, and Isaac nodded.

“I’m not a baby.” Sergei muttered, glaring at the floorboards.

“I don’t see any babies here.” Stiles confirmed. “But you know what? I was a little nervous when *I* first moved in, too. It’s not childish to be afraid of a new house.”

“It’s not?” Sergei asked, making Isaac let out a sigh of relief. Seven or not, Isaac would not have done anything unless he knew that Sergei was comfortable with it.

“Of course not. It’s completely normal.” Stiles said with a smile.

Stiles

“You certainly seem happy.” Derek said, looking over his reading glasses and putting his book down. Stiles took a moment to take in his husband’s shirtless body, before nodding, and beginning to get undressed, himself.

“I thought we had a long road ahead of us. Sergei seemed so closed off, but all it took was a few groceries and clothes and he’s as amicable as you like.”

“He’s certainly...different from other children.” When Stiles shot him a glare, daring his husband to disparage the child that was quickly growing on Stiles, but Derek held up his hands in an easy surrender. “Not in a bad way, it’s just an interesting juxtaposition of characters. On the one hand, he’s very independent and head strong, at least with other people, but at the same time, he’s so dependent on Isaac.”

Stiles had to concede that point. “It’s their situation.” He said. “I mean, I’m missing great chunks of the story, but from what I can tell, it’s because they’ve always been...just them, and Isaac’s always had this stubborn streak of pride, I’m not at all surprised that Sergei has it too.”

Derek snorted as Stiles crawled into the bed and cuddled up to him. “The word ‘stubborn’ should not come from your lips when speaking of others.”

“I’m not stubborn, I’m just always right.” Stiles reasoned with a small smile.

“And Isaac isn’t?”

The smile fell. “Don’t...don’t tell him I said so, but no, I don’t think he’s always right. He could have died, Der, he almost did...There’s stubbornness, and then there’s nearly dying because you’re so dead set against accepting help.”

“After my...after the fire,” Derek’s voice took on the same tone that it always did whenever he brought up the topic, “I was the same way. I mean...I get where he’s coming from. I can understand the desire to be independent.”

“You were-.” Stiles began, but Derek spoke first.

“I was fifteen, and had no business being on my own. I may not have had a son to care for, but despite being at the lowest point in my life, I still felt uncomfortable accepting aid. And you really can’t admonish him, anymore, because he’s here, and he’s taking all the help you throw at him.”

“I know, I still feel like...one slip up, and he’ll run, again, and I’ll never see him again. I’m scared for them both.”

Derek placed a kiss on the side of his head. “Don’t be scared, Stiles. I promise you that if he runs, we’ll find him, again. I’m not going to let your friend or his son suffer. He’s safe, now.”

And that was something that made Stiles want to marry Derek all over, again. He was wed to a man who was largely selfless. Derek had no idea who Isaac was, and he certainly didn’t know Sergei, but he was sitting there, letting Stiles know that he would look after Isaac if it came down to it.

Stiles looked up into his husband’s eyes and smiled. “Have I told you that I love you, recently?”

“Not in at least a few hours.” Derek said, tossing his book onto the bedside table and placing his glasses on top of it, before leaning in for a kiss, which Stiles melted into.

Isaac

Isaac was not at all surprised when Sergei snuck into his room before he could even fall asleep.

“Sorry, papa, but I couldn’t sleep.” Sergei whispered, quietly. Isaac didn’t admonish him or complain, he simply pulled back his covers and allowed Sergei to slip in with him.

“Don’t complain, son. I want you to be comfortable.” It might be a habit forming action, but Isaac could really give a rat’s ass about how others decided to raise their children. His son needed him, and he was far from a place to deny that to him.

Besides, it was nice, to lay in a comfortable bed, his son by his side while they both were in their own ways, trying to find a way to cope with their new lives. Isaac, who was so close to emotional outbursts in recent history, took stock of things as he stared at the ceiling, trying to bring sleep to him.

There was a certain lightness around him, and while he was sure that part of it was the weight he had lost, he knew that a greater part of it was the burden he no longer bore. A massive weight had shifted, enough to be noticeable. And it was in that moment that Isaac came up with a career plan, or rather...an idea. One that he would need to speak to Stiles about, but one that might see him self-sustaining within a relatively short amount of time.

“Papa, what’s a tyke?” Sergei’s voice and the oddity of the question startled Isaac awake.

“What’s a what?” He asked.

“A tyke.” Sergei clarified.

“It’s a word that people use for kids, sometimes. It’s like...malysh in English, why?” Isaac assumed that perhaps Sergei had heard the word on T.V. or seen it on an advertisement in the mall, and the gravity of how wrong he was physically painful.

“That’s what the odd man at the mall called me, and I didn’t know what it meant.”

Isaac shot up in bed, and turned to Sergei, who looked frightened as though he had done something wrong.

“What did you just say?” Isaac demanded, hating that he was scaring Sergei, but needing answers. What ‘odd man’ had spoken to his son?

“There was a guy in one of the stores, when you were talking with Derek about a sweater, I think. He asked me what we were doing, and I said that I wasn’t supposed to talk to strangers, like you taught me, papa, and then he said that I was a ‘smart little tyke’.”

In his panic, Isaac reached out and pulled Sergei to his chest. The recounted moment sending such a chill through him that for a moment, he honestly considered packing them up and fleeing back to Chicago. He took a deep breath, though and managed to make his mind process rational thoughts.

It had probably just been a curious and friendly stranger, Isaac reasoned. Someone who had no idea what a personal faux pas it was for him to speak to the rock of Isaac’s world.

“He didn’t touch your or anything, right?”

Sergei shook his head, his voice easing a bit at the affection Isaac was showing. “No, papa, he just called me a tyke and then walked away.”

“Why didn’t you tell me when we were there?”

“I’m sorry, papa, I thought it wasn’t bad. I thought he was a good stranger.”

“It’s...it’s not that, but the next time that that happens, I’d like for you to tell me right away, okay?” He saw no need to scare his son any more than he already had, but Isaac would be damned if anyone spoke to Sergei without his knowledge, again.

Notes for the Chapter:

Sorry about that, I'm posting this chapter to make up for it.

And I screwed up, again. Here's the Russian translations:

chto, yesli ya khochu videt' tebya ili u menya koshmar= What if I have a nightmare or I want to see you?

My game is off, but hopefully, the chapter isn't.

12. A Reassurance

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac tries to calm down after Sergei's revelation, and Derek takes steps to reassure him.

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything.

Isaac

"It was probably just a random person." Derek said the next morning over coffee. Stiles looked worried, though and rolled his eyes at Derek's cavalier attitude.

"Der, this could be a big problem." Stiles argued. "I don't see why you're so calm."

"Because people say hi. It's a small town, and even if it wasn't, one person talking to Sergei does not a problem make." Derek said, pointedly looking at Sergei. Isaac, while still worried, was grateful for both opposing opinions. They were like the arguments he had had in his dreams solidified.

"I'm really sorry, papa." Sergei mumbled, looking forlornly at his cereal as though *he* had been the problem maker, and Isaac wouldn't stand for that.

"Stiles, really, thank you, but...everything is alright. Sergei, you don't need to apologize, I want you to smile today, okay? Grownups sometimes...worry about stupid little things." Isaac would want to discuss this later with both Stiles and Derek, but he was unwilling to place any more stress on his son to do so. When he stopped to think about it, he realized that it had been wrong to bring it up in front of Sergei in the first place. They shared so much, but Sergei should never have had to share in the fears a father had, until he was one of his own.

Cottoning on, Stiles nodded. "Yeah, Sergei, how are those Lucky Charms?"

"Really good!" Sergei said, displaying his childlike ability to move from one

topic to another with blinding speed. “I picked the best one.”

Stiles’ phone vibrated against their countertop, reminding Isaac that he had to get a new one, and perhaps...one for Sergei. From his financial background, he considered it the ultimate luxury for a seven year-old to have a cellphone, but it would help to ease his worries after what had happened at the mall.

“Scott just heard that you’re back.” Stiles muttered, his fingers swiping across the screen. We normally have dinner with a few people on Sundays, and he’s hoping that you’ll be here for that.”

“Uh...yeah? I mean, if we’re invited.”

“Your house, too.” Stiles reminded, warmly. “Of course you’re invited.”

Isaac smiled at him as he sipped his coffee. “Who else shows up?”

“Let’s see...My father, Scott and Allison, sometimes Parrish, and...” Stiles hesitated for a beat. “Lydia and her husband.”

Isaac narrowed his eyes a little. “Don’t tell me-.”

“He’s gotten a lot better since we were kids, but I mean, Derek hates him, too.” Stiles said, quickly, seemingly choosing a path between reassuring Isaac and making him feel as though he’d have an ally.

“I don’t hate Jackson, I just simply couldn’t care less about the snob.” He clarified.

Isaac sighed, he had hated Jackson growing up, the little bastard having everything in the world: a mother who was still alive, a father who didn’t beat him, money, looks, a girlfriend who had followed him like a lapdog. All of that Isaac could have lived with, but Jacksons had also been Beacon Hills’ excuse for a bully. Making fun of Isaac, Stiles, and Scott for any number of things, but the worse had been when he had invented that story that Isaac was sexually harassing him, following his lie far enough to get his father to sign a restraining order, something that had made Isaac’s own father see red.

Isaac might have been accused of being shallow at times, but he had been too frightened to come out in high school, and he certainly wouldn’t have ever

chased down a pompous asshole like Jackson, no matter what he claimed in court.

The breaking point had been the breakdown that Jackson had gone through in their senior year, though. Jackson had found out that the man and woman who had raised him were not his biological parents, and had gone to *England* for two months to ‘sort things out’. Isaac found the whole affair rather selfish and rude. He would have killed for an adoptive father, paid any sort of fee required to find out that Wesley Lahey was not his father. David and Marsha Whittemore gave Jackson everything and he threw it back in their faces. Isaac had used the word ‘rich boy problems’ a lot during his senior year.

Still, regardless of what Derek or Stiles said, he considered himself a guest in their home, and wasn’t about to disrupt their dinner more than his simple presence would require, so he nodded.

“I’m not quivering with excitement or anything, but if he can be civil, I won’t complain.”

“Papa, who’s Jackson?” Sergei asked, picking up that he seemed to be the problem.

“He’s someone I went to school with, actually everyone that Stiles just mentioned went to school with me, except his father.”

“The way Stiles tells it, you all went to school with him as an escort once or twice.” Derek said, smirking, and Isaac couldn’t help but return it. It was the truth. He, Scott, and Stiles had gotten into their fair share of trouble growing up, but the sheriff escorting them because they had been playing hooky wasn’t really so terrible.

“We were well behaved children...most of the time.” Stiles added.

“Papa, did you get in trouble?”

“Not until I was in high school.” Isaac said, quickly, not wanting to give his son any ideas. It was perhaps the cycle of all parents to not wish the same delinquency on their children as they had committed. Isaac was prepared for his son to get into trouble, but not...not until he was older.

“Did Jackson get you in trouble? Is that why you don’t like him?” Sergei asked.

Isaac and Stiles both nodded. “He did.”

“But papa, you said that you shouldn’t be mean to people just because they’re mean to you.” Sergei said, his voice no longer curious, but authoritative. “Remember, when Mitchel called me a rat and I told you that he was a meanie-face, and you said-.”

“I told you that taking the higher road when someone is rude is the admirable option. You’re right, Sergei.” Isaac said, smiling at his son’s wisdom. “I’ll behave, I promise.”

“Good.” Sergei said, giving a parental nod of his head, and returning to his cereal. Derek was watching Sergei with a look of impressed fondness and Stiles was laughing into his mug.

“So, I’m not asking to make you feel obligated or anything, but do you still remember your mother’s recipe for beef solyanka?”

Isaac nodded. He remembered everything about his mother, her scent, her voice, the soft lullabies that she’d sing to him, the way that she protected him from his father, and her cooking.

Stiles was looking at him, biting his lip, and Isaac chuckled.

“Would you like me to make my mother’s soup for your dinner, Stiles?”

“Well, gosh, if you’re up for it.” Stiles said, while Derek let out a sigh.

“Babe, don’t force Isaac to do things.”

“I really don’t mind, Derek. I haven’t...it’s not like I had much opportunity to cook before now, and there’s definitely worse places to cook than your kitchen.” Isaac said, offering the chrome kitchen an impressed glance. “We’d have to go back to the store, though, I wasn’t planning on making it when we shopped.”

“Thank you!” Stiles shouted, moving closer to Isaac and hugging him. “I’ll go get what you need, just write me a list, and while I’m doing that, you and Sergei can play video games with Derek.”

There was an ease to living with Derek and Stiles that Isaac had not expected. As Isaac wrote a list and Isaac compared it to the things they had bought the day before, he realized that he was actually truly happy for the first time in ages. Of course, living with his son brought with it a joy that Isaac could never replicate, but being in a home where Sergei was eating and smiling, and where he wasn't growing an ulcer worrying about rent, food, shots, and bills was a free sort of happiness that he reveled in. Isaac wanted to bathe in it for a few weeks.

"Are you sure that there was ham in it?" Stiles asked, looking over the list. "I don't remember ham."

"Stiles, who's the second-generation Russian-American whose mother made the stew and who's the guy who ate the stew?"

"Okay, okay, ham it is." Stiles said, surrendering. "Babe, do you need anything?"

Derek shook his head, and Stiles turned to Sergei.

"How about you, buddy? Do you want anything from the store?"

Sergei looked surprised that Stiles had asked him, or perhaps it was the nickname, but he didn't comment on it, and instead, mimicked Derek's head shake.

"Alright, guys, I'll be back, soon." Stiles only paused to give Derek a peck on the cheek before he headed out the door. His inclusion of Sergei and Isaac through the word 'guys' was heartwarming.

"You really didn't have to do this, Isaac." Derek said, once the sound of Stiles' jeep had disappeared.

"No, it's not a big deal. Do you know the last time I could afford to make this? Hint: I was still living with my father."

"As long as you're comfortable. He's just...annoyingly persuasive."

"Things haven't changed much." Isaac agreed, nodding his head. "Stiles was able to talk people out of lunch items in school. I promise, though, I'm actually happy to cook something that involves more than one step. Ramen gets boring."

“Papa, I’m going to the bathroom.” Sergei said, getting up from his spot, and years of wanting to protect his son made Isaac move to get up before reminding himself that they were safe there.

Derek watched Sergei walk to the bathroom before turning back to Isaac, taking a sip of his coffee before speaking.

“Do you really think that he’s in danger?”

It took Isaac a moment to realize what Derek was talking about, before he sighed, and shrugged.

“Maybe? I’m probably just being a little paranoid, but first Stiles saw that guy at the grocery store, and then he brings up that someone spoke to him. I hate to sound like Brian from *Family Guy*, but you really can’t know, Derek. Everything that I hear has to relate to him and his safety. Every creepy feeling that someone might get when they pass a dark alley? That’s magnified tenfold for me. When Stiles said he saw someone watching us, I nearly had a heart attack. I respect your calm and collected observation, I really do, but things like this are always going to freak me out.”

“I understand.” Derek said, taking a moment to drain the last of his cup, before he got up and moved towards the counter to get more. At least, that’s what Isaac assumed, before Derek motioned with his head. Nonplussed, Isaac followed him, watching carefully as Derek checked for Sergei, before opening the cabinet and pointing to a latch hidden inside of the wood. It blended seamlessly with the wood so that Isaac probably wouldn’t have noticed it if it hadn’t been pointed out. Derek pulled it and a soft *click* echoed in the kitchen. A small square of the countertop had lifted minutely and when Derek pulled it up, Isaac saw a small cubby hole containing a handgun and a box of ammunition.

“I worry for Stiles, too. I know it’s not the same, but I *do* know what it’s like to want to protect your family. I failed once, and I won’t allow that happen, again. If you ever feel as though it becomes necessary, this is here for you to use to protect Sergei.”

Isaac glanced at the gun and felt the odd sensation of being terrified and intimidated by a hunk of metal. He had never encountered a firearm before, and he found himself confused by how small it was. So much power packed away in such a tiny contraption. Considering how little he knew Derek, he found it a little

odd that the man had shown him the house's most protective element, but was grateful for the display of trust.

Despite his misgivings, though, he memorized its location and how to access it. It would be a last resort, but he would do anything to protect Sergei if it came down to it.

"Thank you, Derek."

Derek nodded and closed the compartment. "I want you to feel safe here, Isaac."

"Well...it's a little...I've never fired one before." Isaac admitted, quietly.

"Let's make some plans, then. I can take you down to the range, teach you how to shoot...I mean, if you're up for it."

Notes for the Chapter:

I should have named this fic Lucky Charms and Skittles....

Random thought. Anywho, yay for Derek knowing that sometimes protection requires desperate measure. It's odd, I'm not a fan of guns, personally, but it seemed like a human Derek would have one, and so he does.

The scene from Family Guy is one where Brian is a hyper-protective father, and while I think that it's a little overplayed in that episode, I think having kids (natural or adopted) really is something that us childless people can't know.

Jordan will be back soon, and Sergei is going to be warmer to people, so pay attention to what language he's using, as that's a sign of how comfortable he is. Russian means scared, English means content.

Also, a personal request, if I may: For some reason, even though I finished it a while ago, the name Henry is stuck in my brain. I CTRL+F before I post, but if I slip up, let me know?

I'm also curious if my usage of Russian is at all correct, or if Russian people would look at it like it's Greek.

You guys are the best, thanks!

13. Layers and Hangers

Summary for the Chapter:

Stiles tried to get Isaac to see that everyone needs someone to love, but Isaac is stubborn.

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything.

Isaac may not have been able to provide Sergei with an appropriate outlet for it before, but his son was a natural gamer. Their old SNES system could not hold a flame to the series of consoles that Derek and Stiles could boast, but Sergei took to them as though he had grown up with them his entire life. Isaac was a little wary about letting his son play any of the more violent war games, but when Derek chose a racing game as the safer alternative, Sergei beat him after only three matches.

Derek was anything but a sore loser, though. He congratulated Sergei, and offered him free reign to choose any game he wanted, it was Isaac who had to be the spoilsport occasionally.

Isaac felt a pang of guilt that slowly rose within him the longer they were in the room, though. It had the capacity to be large but was rather cramped due to the cardboard boxes piled high on two mahogany desks, the price that had been paid for Sergei to have his own room. Before long, Isaac rose from the couch and moved towards the hallway.

“Papa, where are you going?” Sergei asked, all thoughts of his game gone as he lowered his controller.

“I’m going to go put our clothes away, if they stay in their bags, they’ll get all wrinkly.” Isaac said.

When Sergei moved to get up, Derek chuckled. “You can stay here, Sergei, if your papa says it’s okay.”

Isaac nodded, trusting Derek the same way that the man had trusted him. “Yeah,

Seryozha, stay here and play games with Derek, I'm only down the hall if you need me."

Sergei looked undecided for a moment, but then, in a move that surprised Isaac, he nodded and sat back down. Isaac trusting Derek was one thing, but for his son to have done it when only the day before, he was speaking Russian to avoid speaking to him was certainly something to be noticed and something to smile at.

Isaac experienced another fatherly moment that was new to him when he went to put away his son's clothes. Sergei's previous wardrobe had been too limited for Isaac to really put in the effort, but as he sat folding socks and underwear, he still found himself grinning. It was boring mundane work, but Isaac couldn't be happier to be doing it. It was weird that he was gaining contentment from putting away clothes, but then again, Isaac was a little weird.

He had finished with Sergei's clothes and had begun on his own when Stiles' telltale voice came down the hall announcing his return.

"Hey, I just saw Sergei with Derek." Stiles said, popping his head in the room after about five minutes, and Isaac nodded.

"Yeah, he's...he's got a wall, but apparently all it needs is a few video games to break it down. I thought that I'd be a little...jealous? You know, once he started reaching out to people besides me, but I'm pleased if he's pleased."

"Plus, it gives us a chance to chat." Stiles said, brightly, moving into the room, and picking up a few shirts and a pile of hangers.

"There's a chat that can't be had in front of Sergei?" Isaac asked, and Stiles nodded.

"Well, earlier, we were talking about you feeling unsafe, but you ended it because of Sergei, I just wanted to make sure that you alright and that you know that you're safe here."

"I do..." Isaac said. "I already spoke to Derek and he showed me your little cabinet, which helped. He even offered to teach me how to shoot."

"Plus, despite my earlier sensationalistic response to your worries, my father

kind of is the sheriff. You're probably the safest that one can be in Beacon Hills."

It was an attitude shift that Isaac had been expecting. Stiles often spoke about something, then thought it over, and slightly amended his original words. It had gotten them into a little trouble in school but Isaac preferred it that way, it was almost as though he got two perspectives from one person.

Besides, he really did feel safer once he himself had been given time to stop and think about it.

"I know, and it's not like I'm going to run or anything, I'll probably just feel a little on edge for a few days."

"That's good." Stiles said, turning to him with a blinding grin. "I want you to be happy here."

"Stiles, I really am. Three days and I'm already happier than I've been in a very long time. I was too much of a father for a little while, but that doesn't mean that I'm unhappy."

"Excellent." Stiles said, nodding. He was quiet for a moment, hanging shirts up, before he turned to Isaac, again, biting his lip.

"What about romance?"

"What romance?" Isaac asked, pointed ignoring Stiles' eyes and know damn well what the man was talking about.

"Oh, come on, Isaac. This is a new life for you and Sergei. What's life without a little love?"

"I have love, Stiles. You're my best friend, I love you, I love this house, I love the burdens of poor life being lifted, and I love my son more than anything."

"You know what I meant." Stiles said, flatly, and then he let out a sigh. "But since you want to beat around the bush...What about a little action?"

Isaac snorted. "Calling sex 'action' is being blunt?"

“There’s a kid in the house.” Stiles said, shrugging. “I will not be blamed for corrupting your son.”

“Stiles, I get what you’re saying, but...Like you just said, there’s a kid in the house. *My* kid, and he’s...How many men want to date a guy with a kid?”

“Have you even tried since he was born?” Stiles pressed, repeating a question he had asked earlier

Isaac shrugged. “When he was two, I thought...maybe I could find a man, so I left him with Gladys one night and found a guy.” Isaac sat down on the bed as his memories flared up in response to his words. After checking to ensure that Sergei was not at the door, Isaac continued. “His name was Dylan. I still don’t know what it was that drew me to him...His eyes, I think. You read about gray eyes, but I’ve never seen them until Dylan. I didn’t get his age, but he got mine, and said that since I had turned twenty-one and missed a party, I deserved some shots. Personally, I think that he just wanted an excuse to get some drinks in me.”

Stiles joined Isaac on the bed and crossed his legs, leaning forward to hear more.

“I hadn’t been with a man since Danny in high school, and I didn’t want my...’return to the gay scene’ to be in a bathroom, so I invited him back to my place. We kissed nearly the whole way there, took a cab, because I always think of Sergei first, and if I died in a car crash...where would that leave him?”

Stiles nodded his understanding.

“So, we got to my place and...frak, Stiles, I love Sergei, I really do, but three years without sex? I was frakking horny as a straight sailor. He didn’t even complain that I was living in what amounted to a box with rent, but when I opened the door...” Isaac let out a groan of anger and shook his head. “When I opened the door and he saw Sergei’s toys, he questioned me about them. I explained, very simply, that I was a father, and that Sergei was out of the house, but he got pissed.”

“Pissed?” Stiles asked, sounding confused, and Isaac nodded.

“He said that I was trying to trap him, that he didn’t do relationships, and that he had no desire to raise a son.” Isaac said with a bark of incredulous laughter. “I

tried to explain that I hadn't even thought of it and that a guy I picked up at a bar wasn't who'd I want to help raise Sergei, anyway. He threw a fit and left."

"That's...frak, Isaac, if I'd have been there, I would've-." Stiles began, but Isaac cut him off.

"I know, Stiles, I know. Needless to say, though, the experience left a bad taste in my mouth, and that night, when I picked up Sergei, I realized that it was all...too much hassle. I was working two jobs to support Sergei, it was by luck that Gladys had been able to take him for the night, and I found myself coming to the very sudden epiphany that I had been stupid to try for a night of carnal pleasure, anyway. Since then, I've devoted my life to my son."

"That's over, though." Stiles said, placing a hand on his shoulder. "You're not working two jobs, Derek and I would *love* to watch him, and I guarantee, any parent...Vesta Herself would agree that sometimes, one has to take time for themselves."

"Even if I accepted that, and I'm not saying that I do..." Isaac said, giving Stiles a sad smile, and pointing with his hanger. "Who's going to want the single father of a seven year-old? I mean, this isn't San Francisco, it's Beacon Hills, there's only so many gay men in the town."

"Well...who knows, I won't press you, especially since I don't want to hurt Sergei by some man treating you like Dylan did, but...would it be alright if we just looked a little?"

Isaac nodded to placate Stiles, though he severely doubted that the man would have any success. Maybe one day, when Sergei was in college, he'd find a man and settle down, but he didn't think that such a feat would be possible while Sergei was still young. And he was alright with that. He had accepted the night that Dylan had stormed out of his apartment that his sole love for a long time would be Sergei.

Stiles

Stiles really didn't care much for Isaac's pessimistic attitude. It was undeniable that what Dylan had done had been wrong, but one bad experience should not

have closed his friend off from love so entirely.

Stiles knew Isaac might not be willing to believe it, but Stiles also knew what his gut told him about Jordan Parrish. What he had told Isaac earlier in the day had been a complete fabrication. Parrish had never come to one of Stiles' dinners. They were friends, to be sure, but Parrish often worked the weekends when Stiles' father was off. The invitation had been on a whim, one that had been aroused when Parrish had spoken the words 'dasvidanya' and smiled at Isaac.

Would it blossom into a love of the ages? Stiles didn't know, but his determination as matchmaker knew no bounds, and he had to at least try. If for no other reason than Isaac deserved a little more happiness in his life.

"Speaking of relationships, Sergei and I aren't hampering you and Derek, are we?" Isaac asked, in a blatant attempt at changing the subject.

"Not at all. We...er...were able to enjoy each other's company, last night, and since you have not brought it up, I'm assuming that you didn't hear anything?"

Isaac shook his head, blushing, and Stiles beamed. "That wasn't entirely what I meant." Isaac said.

"I know, and everything else is good, Isaac. We're...our relationship isn't built on solitude and quiet. We're happy that you're here and right now Derek is getting his ass kicked by your son on the Xbox, and he's smiling about it. You've added a fun, new dimension to our lives."

Isaac chuckled. "That's good. He's a good man." Isaac scratched his nose and shifted a little uncomfortably. "When I first got here, I...I thought that he might have been abusive or something." He admitted, quietly.

"What?" Stiles asked, though if he paused to think on it, he knew exactly what Isaac was talking about. "Okay, even I'll admit that he's...less than friendly *looking*, but there's-."

"Layers to him, I get that, now." Isaac said, nodding. "I wouldn't have left Sergei with him if I didn't trust him."

Notes for the Chapter:

Beneath the Claws and Fangs will not be getting an update this week, so I'm going to periodically update this to make up for it. I'm sorry, but my professors are dropping papers like mics at a rap battle.

I think it's important to get the occasional outside perspective so the characters can voice what I feel, like that that Isaac is being stubborn on certain issues.

14. A Friendly Request

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac makes a request of Stiles to make himself feel better.

Notes for the Chapter:

MTV owns everything

Isaac

While Isaac stood at the island in the kitchen, chopping onions for the stew while Stiles did the same for the carrots, he saw a blur of black hair go by, and the fridge door open.

“Papa?”

“Yes, Seryozha?”

“Derek said I could have a soda, but only if you said it was okay.”

Isaac chuckled that Sergei had already opened the refrigerator door, but nodded, anyway.

“Alright, but just one.” He said, knowing damn good and well that Sergei would be allowed to have as many as he wished. In these days of prosperity, Isaac found it hard to deny his son anything, but liked to at least pretend that he had a modicum of control over his son’s diet.

“This one is for Derek.” Sergei said, holding up a second can of Pepsi.

Stiles let out a sigh. “If my husband wanted something to drink, he should have gotten up off of his butt!” Stiles half spoke, half shouted.

Sergei giggled at the word ‘butt’ and Isaac smirked as Derek ran into the room.

“Sergei offered, so don’t start with me.” He said.

“I did, Mr. Stiles, he offered, but I don’t mind.”

Stiles smiled skeptically at his husband, but merely shook his head and returned to the carrots.

“Papa, will you come and play with us, soon?” Sergei asked.

“Sorry, Seryozha, but I still have a while before this is ready. Are you okay staying with Derek?”

Sergei nodded, and Isaac let out a sigh of relief that his son was finally getting comfortable in the house.

“If nothing else, we can play tomorrow, okay?”

“In fact, to make up for taking your papa away, today, I was thinking that we might head to the zoo next weekend.” Stiles said, making Sergei’s eyes light up.

“Oh, papa, can we really?”

Stiles’ announcement was news to Isaac, but he nodded anyway.”

“Yeah, if Stiles and Derek are up to it.”

“Course.” Derek said, nodding while he stole piece of carrot, though he desisted when Stiles brandished his knife at him.

Sergei gave Isaac a hug of thanks, though the idea had been entirely Stiles.

“I love you, papa.”

“I love you, too, Seryozha. Go back to your game.

Sergei and Derek ran back towards the room, with Sergei promising to ‘kick Derek’s butt’.

Stiles gave Isaac a guilty look. “Sorry about that. Is butt bad?”

Isaac shook his head. “I’d prefer it to some English and Russian alternatives.”

Stiles nodded and switched to the tomatoes.

“Stiles, there’s actually a favor I need to ask you.” Isaac said, putting his knife down for a moment. Seeing this serious gesture made Stiles imitate it, and turn to Isaac.

“Sure, man, anything you need.”

“Stiles, I need a job.”

Stiles snorted and shook his head. “I told you-.”

“I know what you told me, but this isn’t me being intransigent. This is me wanting to provide for my son, I’ll accept your hospitality as long as you’re willing to offer it, and I’m not saying that I’m going to move out and find a place of my own, I think Sergei really needs this stability.”

Stiles nodded his agreement. “He does. So why...?”

“Because, I’m not going to be comfortable sitting here, doing nothing all day. I may not have liked my *job*, but I want to *work*. That’s why I want your help. I have a degree that’s completely useless except for one field.”

“You...” Stiles seemed to think it over for a moment, before a small grin lit up his features. “You want to be a professor at the community college?”

Isaac nodded. “I obviously thought about doing it in Chicago, but I never had the time to go through the application process, they wanted interviews, and unpaid practice classes, I just...couldn’t afford to take that much time off of work.”

“That’s actually not a terrible idea. Staying here gives you the time to go through all of that, because it may not be the most glamorous place...anywhere, I still had to go through the same thing.”

Isaac nodded, happy to see that Stiles seemed to be on board with the idea.

“I’ll speak to the faculty and see what we can do push this...on one condition.” Stiles seemed to add as an afterthought, his grin growing. Isaac groaned and prepared himself for the worse.

“Can I at least hear the condition before I agree?”

Stiles shook his head. “Nope.” He said, popping the ‘p’. “I want you to trust your friend to know what he’s doing.”

Isaac *did* trust Stiles, and so he nodded. “Agreed...to whatever evil scheme you have planned.”

“It’s not evil.” Stiles said, mocking a look of hurt. “It’s very simple: Even if I was the dean and used all of my power, we wouldn’t be able to get you in before the fall semester. Summer is over in a month. Fall starts around the time that Sergei would be starting school, anyway, so it would all line up, beautifully.”

Isaac nodded, again, waiting for the actual terms of the agreement to come up.

“I mean, when you think about it, I’m actually pretty much a genius to have thought of this, and you already agreed-.”

“Stiles, babbling.”

“Right, sorry. You’re going to spend the rest of summer with Sergei. You’re not going to try and find a job, or work, or panhandle, or anything like that. Spend a month relaxing, breathing, and I will do everything I can to make you a professor after that.”

It really wasn’t as terrible as Isaac had been imagining. In fact, the deal was one that was remarkably in his favor, and though Isaac’s first instinct was to deny it, Sergei’s laughter floating from the game room tickled at his heartstrings and made him smile.

“Alright. No work for a month.”

Stiles pulled him into a hug, and Isaac only filched a little at the knife that Stiles had picked back up during the conversation. “Wow, a few days and already I’ve broken down your walls. I expected much more of an argument.”

“Oh, believe me, my heart wanted to argue, and if I was the only one to consider, I would’ve, but...Him.” Isaac said, motioning with his head towards the room where his son was playing video games. “You’re right, this will be good for him.”

“Everything I do is good for him, at least...I hope it is.”

“It is.” Isaac confirmed. “You’d make an amazing father.”

Stiles turned the conversation lighter by letting out a bark of laughter, resuming his work on the tomatoes. “Like hell. I’m an awesome uncle...maybe, but I wouldn’t dare to take one on for myself, and I might have my father arrest any person willing to give me one.”

Isaac knew that Stiles was referring to adoption, but he tweaked it a little to refer to himself. “I’d let you have Sergei. If...if something ever happened to me, I’d feel better knowing that he was with you than almost anyone else...No, frak that. *Anyone* else.”

Stiles smiled at him and opened his mouth to speak, but closed it again before clearing his throat.

“Isaac, that’s...” His voice was thick. “But...thank you, but let’s not test that theory, huh? A father like you? Let’s make sure you’re around for Sergei’s whole life.”

“You and I both know that life’s not always that perfect.” Isaac said, quietly. “It’s something that I worry about...Sorry.” He said, quickly. “It’s...it’s...” He sighed. “Would you pass me the mushrooms?”

Stiles complied and before long, their conversation had turned back to lighter issues, such as remembering their youth.

“And the time that we put super glue on Mr. Harris’ chair?” Stiles asked laughing while they were trying to recall their fondest school memory.

“Who says that old movies can’t teach anything?” Isaac added, remembering that he had gotten the idea from Sister Act 2.

“He’s still here, you know? Works at the college with me, he’s actually not...a terrible person.”

“Lies and subterfuge!” Isaac said, though with a laugh. “I refuse to believe that he’s anything but a monster, you must have been brainwashed.”

“Maybe. There is a surprising lack of coffee whenever I go to school meetings. And he’s just like Jackson, still as smug as sh...shitake mushrooms.” Stiles

quickly curbed his curse.

“How smug exactly are shitake mushrooms?” Isaac asked as he chopped some on the counter.

“Too smug.” Stiles said, pointing with his knife. “They think they’re the presidents of the mushroom world.”

“I thought mushrooms had kingdoms, not democracies.”

“Only in Italy.”

Isaac chuckled. “Which reminds me, you and I need to get together and game soon. I know you have work tomorrow, but-.”

“After that? Absolutely!” Stiles practically shouted. “Maybe even tonight, depending on...how long dinner takes.”

“Oh, I’m not sure I liked that pause. You’re not planning anything, are you?”

Isaac did not for a moment believe the look of innocence on Stiles’ face as he asked: “Who me? What could I possibly be planning?”

“All these years and I still don’t know, but I *do* know your looks, and you’re planning something.”

Stiles just let out an evil chuckle and pulled a monstrous soup pot from under the counter.

Isaac had little choice but to trust Stiles, the man had not led him astray before, and in any case, whatever the man planned couldn’t be too terrible. Though he did have a nagging feeling that it involved Isaac’s love life, which would only lead to disappointment for the both of them. While Isaac was willing to slacken his pride for many other things, his standards for what a potential boyfriend would not, nor would the fact that he didn’t have high hopes of a man accepting him with a son.

“So, we’re not just having this, right? I mean, I know it’s got mean, but...”

“No, I’m making bread and Cornish game hens and don’t tell anyone, but I’m

‘making’” Stiles used air quotes, “this.” He finished, opening the freezer and pulling out a truffle cheesecake.

Isaac couldn’t help the groan of longing. How much time had passed since he had had the chance to indulge on sweets?

“It all sounds great, Stiles, and you do this every week?”

“Well, we have the dinner, but I don’t always cook it, first week with you back home, though? I thought that it deserved a little...more pomp than usual. Last week we just ordered pizza.”

“I might literally kill for a pizza, right now.” Isaac moaned.

“Are you hungry?” Stiles asked, the genuine concern in his voice making Isaac glance up and smile.

“No, I just really miss pizza. Remember when we were little and your father would...save me from mine? He’d always order us a pizza, and I’ve...I’ve long considered it my favorite food. It reminds me of home.”

It wasn’t until that moment that Isaac realized that in a way, a Stillinski had given him a home, not once, but twice. After his mother’s death, John had acted like more of a father than Wesley, guarding him, keeping him safe, and more than once involving the authorities when things got too rough.

“I...I didn’t realize that you remembered that.” Stiles said, softly. “I remember it as being like having a brother. I mean...Scott and I hung out, and the three of us...but when it was you and me, you were like a little brother.”

Isaac scooped up the mushrooms and dropped them into the pot, the tears in his eyes having nothing to do with the lingering scent of onions in the air. Like Stiles, Isaac was an only child, and to think of their bond as a fraternal was warming.

“I’m sorry, Stiles.” Isaac whispered, and Stiles let out a laugh.

“That wasn’t supposed to be an apology inducing speech, man. What are you sorry for?”

“I...You and your father...you’re right, you’ve always looked out for me, and I...when I got to Chicago, I fell off the map, and I’m sorry.”

“You were struggling, and I’m not going to lie, Isaac, I was worried. I stayed up every night just...praying that you were okay, but I get it. You were low on money, you made the decision to keep a roof over your head and feed your son instead of paying for a phone. I, vy upryamy. I’ve known that since you were a kid, so you weren’t going to ask for help. I told you when you got here that I wasn’t going to admonish you for how you raised him. You don’t have to apologize to me for not keeping in touch, because I *understand*. What’s important is you’re here now, and I’ll be damned if I let it happen, again.”

Notes for the Chapter:

vy upryamy = You're stubborn

Still finals season, so I can't update the other fic, yet, and I'm so sorry for that. I'd understand if I awak to my apartment Tp'd tomorrow.

15. An Old Wound

Summary for the Chapter:

The dinner party starts with Isaac confronting an old foe.

Isaac

Isaac was nervous the closer time came to the dinner. The house was thick with the delicious scent of cooking chicken, his soup, and bread. Before that day, Isaac would never have guessed that Stiles was a good cook, in fact, John had seemed determined to keep his son away from the kitchen at all costs, and considering Stiles' clumsiness, it had seemed wise at the time.

It was all the more surprising, then, when not a single thing had been broken or burned, and things looked more or less...awesome.

So, no. Isaac wasn't worried about the food portion of dinner, it was more having to face so many people, most of whom he had grown up with, and even if he was accepting of the help the Stiles and Derek had provide, there was a big gap between going to your best friend hat-in-hand, asking for help, and having everyone you knew find out about it, which was doubtlessly going to happen.

Isaac didn't think that Stiles or Derek would sell him out, but no doubt his story had spread around Beacon Hills, and even if it hadn't, Isaac *had* been poor, it wasn't in his nature to lie. Any question about what he had been up to would be answered honestly...

But that didn't mean that he was looking forward to it.

"Why don't you go and take a shower? It will help you calm down." Stiles suggested. The dinner might have been fancy, china, and actual silverware laid out, but Stiles never changed. He was wearing a Power Rangers t-shirt, a pair of jeans, and parading through the kitchen barefoot.

"I already took a shower, I'm still just..." Isaac clenched his hands and shook his head. "I don't know. It's just...after everything, I'm so nervous about seeing everyone."

“Well, don’t be.” Stiles said, like it was so easy. “Look, you have an amazing son in there, and that’s where you need to draw the line. So you were poor...Who gives a frak? You also raised an awesome kid, and if anyone, *anyone* wants to give you shitake mushrooms over that, I’ll kick them out. I put my energy into my career, you put it into Sergei, so flaunt that. It’s nothing to be ashamed of.”

Isaac cracked a small grin. Sergei was his pride and joy, the apple of his eye, so why would he hide that?

“You’re pretty smart.” Isaac finally said.

“I’m a frakking genius.” Stiles gloated with a wink, and Isaac couldn’t help but mess with him a little.

“Well, I wouldn’t go that far. You chose the red ranger, everyone knows that blue is the way to go.”

Stiles snorted. “Then go put on the blue shirt, I bet that’s half of your problem, right there. Look at you, this isn’t the opera, this is your home, be a little less formal.”

Isaac looked down at himself. He had indeed gone formal, wearing a button up shirt and tie, khakis, and dress shoes.

“I wanted...” Isaac wasn’t sure what he had wanted. It had simply seemed like the sort of thing people dressed up for, but seeing Stiles in a more relaxed outfit, made him nod.

Isaac did feel a little better, wearing the blue ranger’s shirt, with Sergei wearing a matching one in green. When Derek came out from his own shower, having dressed almost exactly as Isaac *had* been, he did a double take of the three of them in the kitchen.

“Like natural brother, eh, babe?” Stiles asked, wrapping an arm around Isaac and laughing.

“I’ve been outnumbered.” Derek whispered in mock horror.

“Don’t tell me that you have no affinity for being a nerd when you just spent all day playing video games with my son.” Isaac said, reproachfully, Stiles warm

attitude, making him feel better. He had Sergei, let them say what they would.

“I’m a nerd.” Derek grumbled, sounding as though his pride was wounded. “But I prefer to dress like an adult.”

“I’m pretty sure my tag says ‘adult medium’.” Sties countered, and Isaac nodded, though his was a large, as he was slightly taller than both Stiles and Derek.

The knock at the door interrupted whatever witty remark Derek was going to make, and when he opened it, Isaac was overcome by a flurry of olive skin and black hair.

Scott’s voice was high pitched in his excitement. “It’s you, it’s really you, man! And were you always this tall? How have you been? Stiles said that you had a kid, and-.”

“Scott! I really need to breathe.”

Scott let go of Isaac and stood back, taking him in. His crooked jaw and even more crooked smile all too familiar. Isaac’s second friend had gained some muscle in the years since Isaac left, straining his V-neck, and he had grown a goatee, giving his youthful face a touch of maturity.

“That was enthusiastic.” Isaac said with a smirk.

“Eight bloody years and you dare to complain about my enthusiasm?” Scott asked.

“Papa, we weren’t bleeding.” Sergei whispered from behind Isaac.

The buxom woman that Isaac recognized as Allison walked forward, flipping her long brunette hair over her shoulder.

“He’s been watching a *lot* of British shows, lately. He’s really picking up their lingo. I still blame you, Stiles.” Allison said, giving Isaac a hug that was almost boring by comparison of Scotts’. Her flowery perfume lingered when she backed away. “How are you, Isaac?” She asked while Stiles grumbled about ‘Downton Abbey is not my fault.’

“Good, thank you. How about you?”

“We’re well, thank you. I-.”

“I’m Sergei, you’re pretty.” Sergei interrupted, making Isaac let out a groan.

“Seryozha, mind your manners.” He said, reproachfully.

Allison didn’t seem to mind, though. She squatted down in her black dress to Sergei’s level and held out her hand.

“I’m Allison, it’s nice to meet you Sergei, and this is my fiancé, Scott.”

“Oh, da...darn, Isaac, he’s like a little you with black hair.” Scott said, taking Sergei’s hand and shaking it.

“Papa, what’s a fiancé?”

“It means that they’re going to be married, soon.” Isaac said, smiling down at his son. He was relieved and proud that Sergei was using English and actually *speaking* to Allison and Scott.

“Soon being whenever Jackson’s father finally makes Scott partner.”

“Saving up for a big wedding?” Isaac asked, chuckling when Allison discreetly pointed to Scott, who was blushing.

“It’s for my mother, she wants to see her son in a big wedding, and it’s not like I’m going to tell her no.”

Isaac nodded his agreement. “She still has that authoritative air that John could never quite pull off.”

“I know, right? Like when we...Wait, when did you see her?” Scott asked, his head tilting in confusion.

“I...I thought she would have told you, I was...” Isaac’s sentence fell off, but Sergei finished it for him.

“He was in the hospital.”

“What!?” Scott’s voice still squeaked. “When? Are you okay? Are you hurt?”

“Scott, buddy, chill.” Isaac said, bracing his hands on his friend’s shoulders. “I’m alright, it was just a light bit of...malnourishment.”

As Isaac had expected, Scott’s eyes turned stormy, even Allison looked a little angry. To prevent them from saying anything that might awaken his son’s protective instincts, though, Isaac pulled Sergei closer to him. He let out a sigh of relief when it worked. Scott bit the inside of his lip, and shook his head.

“No.” He finally huffed. “My mom didn’t tell me, there’s this whole confidentiality thing. *No one* else told me either, though.” He said, pointedly, glaring at Stiles.

Isaac figured that Scott was mad for the same reason that Stiles had been. He worried about Isaac, and Isaac had let them all down by the terrible condition his life had been. Guilt and shame, Isaac’s old friend’s burst to life in his chest once again.

“I didn’t want to worry you or have you become...overwhelming before Isaac got settled.”

“Sergei can be shy around strangers.” Isaac added, and as if to prove his point, Sergei pulled himself closer.

“You’re alright, though?” Scott asked.

Isaac nodded. “Yes. It really wasn’t a big deal.”

“Except for the fact that it was, but...I’m glad you’re alright. Is that your mom’s soup?” He asked, changing the subject, for which Isaac was grateful. He may have felt guilty for it, but he didn’t want to be harassed for doing something that had felt right at the time.

They chatted while they waited for everyone else to arrive, catching up, swapping stories. Scott showed interest in Sergei and seemed impressed that Isaac had raised him on his own, something that, like Stiles, he knew about from firsthand experience through Melissa. Isaac found out that Scott had proposed in a rather elaborate way to Allison, involving her crossbow while hunting.

“So, she lifts the crossbow to shoot the duck, and the ring was right there on her trigger.” Scott explained, wrapping his arm around Allison, who was blushing.

“That’s really sweet.” Isaac said. “And even though you guys have to wait, it’s very kind of you to give your mother a big wedding.”

Allison opened her mouth to add something, when there was another knock at the door.

Stiles checked the peephole before giving Isaac a significant look. Sure enough, it was Jackson and Lydia.

Considering that Jackson had been the star lacrosse player in high school, Isaac was expecting someone the size of Derek to walk through the door but Jackson was actually rather skinny. He was not as thin as Isaac himself was, but even Scott had gained more muscle. Lydia, on the other hand, had not changed in the slightest. She floated into the apartment on six-inch heels, her gold gown shimmering in the light. She was still beautiful, Isaac had to admit. He had always thought that in reality, Jackson was that luckiest of them all for being such a dick, but landing someone like Lydia.

“We’re not late are we?” She asked, removing a shawl from her shoulders. “Mr. Cliché here wouldn’t leave the house without finishing his game.”

“You’re still playing?” Isaac asked, Lydia’s comment making him think that Jackson had perhaps gone pro, but her tinkling laugh quickly ended that line of thought.

“No, he’s working with Scott, the only lacrosse in his life now is on the T.V. And is that how we greet old friends, Lahey?”

Isaac rose and embraced her, tightly.

“You are in so much trouble for not letting me see your son, sooner.” She whispered into his ear, but with a light tone that made Isaac chuckle.

“Well, let me introduce you. Lydia, this is my son, Sergei. Sergei, this is Lydia... Whittemore?” He made it a question, noticing the ring on her finger. Jackson let out a snort while Lydia explained.

“I kept my name.” She said, smiling. “Much to the chagrin of this one.”

“Is that Jackson, papa?” Sergei asked, pointing at the man in question.

Isaac nodded and walked him a little closer. “Jackson, this is my son Sergei.”

Jackson, like Allison, crouched down to Sergei’s level and shook his hand. It was a little surprising considering the suit that he was wearing.

“Nice to meet you, young man. Has your father been telling you all kinds of horror stories about me?”

“It’s not a ‘story’ if it’s the truth.” Isaac mumbled.

“Papa said you were mean to him in school. I don’t know if I like you.” Sergei announced rather bluntly, making everyone except Jackson laugh, even Lydia guffawed.

“When was I mean?” Jackson asked, sounding honestly curious which only made Isaac roll his eyes, and head towards the kitchen. It was exactly like Jackson to strut around and pretend as though he was completely innocent.

“Yesli vam bol’no moy papa, ya sdelayu, chto vy pozhaleyete ob etom.” Sergei warned, making Isaac grin while his back was turned, and Stiles let out a laugh.

“Watch your step, Jackson, this one’s got daggers for anyone who hurts Isaac.” Stiles said, his eyes dancing in amusement.

“I didn’t hurt him, I walked in the door and get cussed out in Russian.” Jackson grumbled.

“He wasn’t cussing you out, I raised my son better than that, he’s simply warning you to be nice to me.” Isaac explained. “He said ‘if you hurt my papa, I’ll make sure that you regret it.’ So a threat, yes, but cussing it was not.”

Jackson let out a huff and followed Isaac into the kitchen while Allison, Scott, and Lydia all doted over a preening Sergei.

“I don’t know what that was for.” Jackson snapped, leaning against the counter. “You didn’t have to tell him-.”

“The truth?” Isaac countered. “Don’t play the saint, that halo is tarnished for me, and I didn’t, by the way. I brought up that I knew you and that you made my life a little difficult, anything else, he inferred. My son is bright.”

“I...okay maybe I was a dick in school, but you know what? Kids can be dicks, like threatening complete strangers...” He muttered.

Isaac picked up a knife and held it up to Jackson, walking until they were mere inches apart.

“I *know* that you didn’t just call my son a dick.” He hissed, his eyes glancing to ensure that Sergei was distracted by Lydia’s attention, before turning back to Jackson, whose eyes were wide. “I’ll have a talk with him about threatening strangers, but this isn’t high school. Disparage my son again, and *I’ll* make sure you regret it.”

Jackson nodded, his eyes darting between Isaac’s and the knife. Jackson tossed it back on the counter and stepped away. Isaac wondered if perhaps he had overreacted, living for so long on the instinct to protect his son, but he did not regret making his stance clear.

Jackson stood seething for a moment, before he finally spoke.

“Isaac, I’m sorry.” He finally whispered. “I didn’t mean...it was reactionary.”

“That’s a bit of an understatement. Sergei is defensive, especially around people who have caused the people he loves harm.”

“I...your son’s not a dick, Isaac. He’s very cute, and maybe I wasn’t exactly innocent.”

“Jackson Whittemore admitting his flaws, hell must be frozen over.” Isaac said with a touch of snark, though he was smiling.

“I’m sorry, Isaac. It’s...look, how about we start over? Pretend I just walked through the door.” Jackson offered. Isaac was a little skeptical, but finally let out a sigh.

“Sergei, come here, please.”

Sergei still looked smug and he walked into the kitchen. “Yes, papa?” He asked, sending a glare to Jackson.

“None of that, son. Apologize to Jackson, we’re all going to be friends.”

“Better than friends, I’ll be your fun uncle Jackson.” Jackson offered, but Sergei shook his head.

“Derek’s my fun uncle.” He said, and Isaac looked up a little guiltily at Derek, only to find that he was smiling.

“Okay.” Jackson said, and Isaac was almost certain that he was dreaming, because Jackson actually sounded remorseful that Sergei had blown him off so easily.

“I’m sorry that I hurt your father, Sergei, can you give me another chance?”

Sergei eyes him suspiciously for a moment. “Give my papa a hug and say sorry.” He ordered.

Isaac expected Jackson to give a half-hearted hug with his fingertips, but when he was pulled into the tight embrace, he found himself surprised.

“I’m sorry, man.” Jackson said, sounding sincere, and Isaac nodded.

“Me too.”

Notes for the Chapter:

Yesli vam bol'no moy papa, ya sdelayu, chto vy pozhaleyete ob etom. = If you hurt my papa, I'll make you regret it.

So, yes, Sergei is a little bundle of protection and cuteness. Since this is the SLOWEST BUILD EVER for both the main conflict and the main romance, I wanted a little spark of something.

Let me know what you think, please?

Thank you.

16. I Forgot How Wonderful Butterflies Feel.

Summary for the Chapter:

The dinner party begins and Isaac finds himself crushed completely.

Isaac

Isaac was still smiling about his tentative reconciliation with Jackson when Jordan came through the door. Isaac looked up and for some reason, seeing the smile on Isaac's face, Jordan responded with one of his own. It wasn't awkward, though. Isaac felt warmed by the gesture, and he waved to the man. It was again a little odd to see him out of uniform, wearing a Voltron shirt and jeans, and bearing a bottle of wine.

"Deputy Parrish!" Sergei shouted, running up to the man. "Did you bring me more Skittles?"

Isaac was absolutely mortified at what a normal life was doing to his son's manners, and quickly opened his mouth to admonish him, but before he could, Jordan reached into his pocket and pulled out a packet of candy.

"Of course, Seryozha." He said, happily.

"That's...you really didn't have to." Isaac said, approaching him.

"And I really don't mind. It makes him happy, how is that a bad thing?" He asked.

Isaac was touched by what Jordan had done, not even letting his pride get in the way of a genuinely good act.

"Tebe luchshe, Isaac?" Jordan asked, surprising Isaac. Stiles had learned Russian mostly from Isaac when they were younger, but beyond that, no one had gone out of their way to speak the language to him.

"Ya khorosho, spasibo." Isaac replied, but Jordan's smile fell a little and he ducked his head.

“I actually only learned that one phrase. Did I say it right?” He asked.

“You did.” Isaac said, encouragingly. “It’s not an easy language, though.”

“But it made you smile, didn’t it?” Jordan said, before turning to Stiles. “Stillinski, I swear, I will impound your jeep if you don’t get your registration updated.”

The room had broken into light conversation, but Isaac was a little winded. The encounter was brief, but Parrish had certainly imprinted himself onto Isaac’s mind. Who went to the trouble to learn a phrase in Russian just to see someone smile?

Isaac shook his head and went to stir the stew one final time, but really just felt a little out of place. It was actually probably for the best, with people not bombarding him with question, but their conversations were mostly insider. Isaac had no idea what ‘that deal you were working on last week’ was, and hadn’t even known that Lydia’s mother was sick, so ‘is your mom doing any better’, had no application to him. Isaac was content, but it would take time to fall back into a perfect groove with everyone, and watching Sergei happily munch on Skittles, he realized that he was okay with that. Not everything could fall into place in one night, it would take time.

“Hey, loner.”

Isaac spun around to find Parrish leaning against the wall.

“Did you finish yelling at Stiles about his jeep?”

Parrish snorted. “It’s been almost four months. I told him to handle it and he keeps on putting it off.” He said, shaking his head.

Isaac remembered Stiles’ procrastination and smiled to know how little things had changed since he left.

“But, I really came in here to get an answer. I didn’t understand your sentence.”

“Oh...right. I’m doing better, it really was only the one night that I wasn’t feeling well. Stiles and Derek have been making sure that I eat.” Isaac said.

Jordan's smile grew, again. "That's good. I'd hate to hear that you were still sick. Sergei likes it here?"

"He does." Isaac said. "I was worried that he'd slip into the habit of speaking Russian, but he seems to be getting along with everyone." Isaac motioned with his head to where Derek and Sergei were talking, no doubt about a video game.

"He certainly seems happy."

"Well, when a kind man brings him candy, you didn't really expect him to frown."

"I'm sorry if I overstepped any bounds or rules, he just seemed to really enjoy them."

"You thought of my son's happiness, which isn't exactly a capital offense. Thank you, Deputy."

"Oh, God, please call me Jordan. I feel so old when people call me 'deputy'." Jordan reminded, softly.

"Thank you, Jordan." Isaac amended, making Jordan flash his teeth at him.

"This smells good, what is it?" Jordan asked, taking an interest in the pot Isaac was standing over.

"Solyanka. It's a Russian stew, sweet and sour, some people don't like it for that, but Stiles cajoled me into making it for the party."

"May I?" Jordan asked, picking up a spoon, and Isaac nodded. He scooped up a bit and blew on it before placing it in his mouth, Isaac couldn't help but watch his throat muscles tighten as he swallowed, feeling a little ashamed of himself afterwards.

"This is really good. You made it yourself?"

"Stiles helped cut some vegetables." Isaac said, blushing. "You really like it?"

"Yeah! I mean...yes." Jordan said, checking his own enthusiasm. "Where'd you learn to cook it?"

“My mother taught me the recipe when I was little. There’s...there’s not too much that I have of her, except her language and the food she cooked.”

“Oh, shit, Isaac. I’m...sorry, I didn’t know.” Parrish’s smile had crashed, and he seemed genuinely distressed, and while the reminder had hurt, it hadn’t been Jordan’s fault, and Isaac *wanted* that smile back.

“It’s alright. You had no way of knowing and it happened a long time ago, I’m at peace with it.”

“Still-.”

“Still, nothing. It’s alright. How were you supposed to know?” Isaac smiled at him, and it made Jordan give a tentative grin in return.

The butterflies in his stomach were the first in a very long time, and they actually made Isaac’s breath leave his body in a whoosh, before he blushed and turned back to the soup.

“Raising a son on your own, able to cook, humble, and that blush...” Jordan said. “I’d say Sergei is one lucky little man.”

That actually made Isaac drop his spoon. He had been complimented before, but never so...intimately. At least, that’s what it felt like. As though Parrish was making a comment that was kind and dirty all at once. And Isaac really didn’t know what to do with that.

So he ran.

“Guys, I think dinner’s ready, if you are.” He called to the living room, moving to get Sergei and get him settled.

Jordan didn’t follow him, but didn’t look wounded at Isaac’s rough and abrupt departure, either. He took the seat next to Isaac, though, which Isaac really could find nothing to complain about.

Except the occasional glance, which Isaac found *impossible* not to blush at. Protective, sultry, just fucking hot in general, Jordan’s eyes conveyed a lot of feelings that Isaac had not experienced in a long while. It evoked feelings even older than Natasha, back to Isaac’s last boyfriend, Danny. The childhood

romance that they had shared, so superficial and not long term material, but real while it had lasted.

Isaac forced himself to focus, though, he could not allow himself to feel anything for Parrish who was probably just friendly, and even if he wasn't would fall into the same category of men that Isaac had come to expect. Parrish might treat Sergei, kindly, but there was no way he was ready to be a father, and Isaac wasn't going to allow himself fantastical delusions otherwise.

And if Isaac slipped up and melted under the glance, that was no one's business but his own.

Jordan

Oh, boy, Jordan could get lost in those eyes. He'd surface occasionally to stare longingly at that smile, but those crystal blue orbs would no doubt drag him back down again.

It was true, Isaac seemed less than open to his advances, but Jordan was a stubborn man, and had never met a challenge he wouldn't face head on. And after all, he wanted Isaac to be *happy*, which meant moving at his pace, even if was a snail's one, because if Isaac was smiling at the end of it, it would all be worth it.

Jordan had been accused of being shallow once or twice in his life, but his attraction to Isaac had very little to do with that. Isaac was handsome, of course, but there was so much more to the man than that.

Isaac's self-determination was a fire that even from a distance, warmed Jordan. The man was so confident, but not in a cocky way like Jackson, instead, Isaac seemed so sure of himself in his convictions to do everything he could to protect his son.

The love for his son. That was what impressed Jordan the most. There was absolutely no selfishness in Isaac. Whenever Sergei opened his mouth, he became Isaac's entire world, and from what Stiles had told him, it had been that way since he was born. It had actually been Isaac's desire to provide for his son that had landed him in the hospital. While Jordan might have had some qualms

about taking it that far, he still admired Isaac for his resolve.

“I feel old having to ask, but what grade are you going into, Sergei?” Scott asked.

“Second.” Sergei said. “Papa said that I was lucky, because not everyone can go at my age.”

Scott’s eyes darkened in confusion, as did everyone else’s until Isaac explained:

“Sergei was born on Halloween, he’s one day from the cut off age.”

“You have your birthday on Halloween? That is seriously awesome.” Scott said, and Jordan nodded his agreement.

“Which did you prefer, your birthday or trick-or-treating?” Jackson asked, and immediately, Jordan saw Isaac flinch and curl in on himself, sparking a flare of anger from Jordan.

“Papa always took me trick-or-treating, but...” Sergei began, sounding hesitant.

“But I couldn’t afford to get him anything for his birthday.” Isaac snapped, and the reason for his reaction became obvious. Jordan looked at Isaac, the frown on his lips looked so unnatural. Isaac was a man meant to smile, and that Jackson had violated that made Jordan feel...angry, and he wasn’t the only one if the looks on people’s faces were any indication, even Lydia was glaring. Before he could speak to it, though, Jackson quickly did.

“Isaac, I’m sorry, I wasn’t thinking. It’s just-.”

“It’s fine.” Isaac said, quietly.

“No. It’s really not. I know what you went through, how much you fought to support him, I swear I wasn’t trying to make light of it. It was just...a slip up, and I apologize.” Jackson said, sounding sincere enough that Isaac smiled at him.

“It’s...I’m still a little defensive. I flew off the handle.”

Dinner was slightly more awkward after that, with Isaac being very quiet, and

only speaking when directly asked a question. Jackson for his part at least looked guilty about this and ate in a similar silence.

An idea sparking in his head, Jordan turned to Isaac.

“You play video games, right?” He asked.

“Yeah, but...I couldn’t...We only had an SNES in Chicago.”

“Then why not let me help you catch up?” Jordan said, quickly, scared that he had inadvertently made Isaac feel inadequate, again.

The shadow of a grin flickered across Isaac’s face. “If Stiles doesn’t have anything else planned, I’d...I’d like that.”

“No, no, go on.” Stiles said quickly, giving Jordan a wink.

Jordan accepted that Stiles seemed to be pushing them together because *he* wanted to see more of Isaac. There was something warming about being in Isaac’s presence, and while it may have been selfish of him, Jordan wanted more of it.

“Sergei, would you like to come with me and Jordan while we play video games, or stay here?” Isaac asked Sergei, who shifted a little in his seat, his eyes flicking to the desert that Stiles had laid out.

“Can I stay?”

“Of course, Seryozha.” Isaac said with an indulgent smile.

“Leave the dishes for me, I’ll take care of them when everyone goes home.” Isaac whispered to Stiles as he got up from the table. It was nothing, really. Playing video games with some, which Jordan, in his nerdy life, must have done a hundred times, but Jordan couldn’t help the pulse of excitement that ran through him, and if the looks on everyone else’s faces were anything to go by, they were all too aware.

Notes for the Chapter:

Tebe luchshe, Isaac = Are you better, Isaac?

Ya khorosho, spasibo = I'm well, thank you.

Don't ask me why two kids in my fics have their birthdays on Halloween.

So...is anyone reading this? I know I sound needy as hell, but it just feels so weird that this hasn't gotten the response my other fics have. Is it bad? Please tell me if it's bad.

17. Eloquence Isn't My Strong Suit, Dude

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan has a question for Isaac

Isaac

“I’m starting to believe that you might be a liar, Isaac.” Jordan mumbled, turning to him with a mock glare as his character’s final life was spent.

“What do you mean?”

“You told me that you had never played this before, and yet here you are, kicking my ass.”

Isaac laughed, Jordan’s companionship having made him feel much better after what had happened at dinner. “We used to do this all the time. I mean...I never played this,” Isaac said, gesturing towards the Wii U, “but Stiles, Scott and I would play video games a lot when I was growing up. I guess...it’s like a bicycle.”

Jordan chuckled, his face lighting up with the smile. “I guess I’ll have to practice more.”

It certainly wasn’t the biggest subject when Isaac was picking the people he liked to hang out with, but the fact that Jordan could accept a video game loss with an easy grace was certainly endearing.

“Would you be up for another match?” Jordan asked, and Isaac nodded, not at all minding spending time the deputy.

“Yeah, but let me go and check on Sergei, first. I don’t want him to worry about me.” Isaac said, getting up. “Would you like anything while I’m up?”

“No, thanks.” Jordan said, turning his attention back to the screen, looking as though he was trying to get in some practice before Isaac returned.

As it turned out, there *was* something that Stiles had arranged for his guests to

do. Isaac walked in on the middle of a game of Monopoly, and apparently Isaac wasn't the only one who had picked up new games quickly.

"Papa, look! I got Nidoking, all I need Nidoqueen and I'll have both the blue ones!" Isaac looked down at the board and realized that Stiles had a Pokémon version of Monopoly, and really, he didn't know why he was even surprised.

Despite the less than serious tone of the game, it really did seem as though Sergei was winning.

"That's pretty impressive, son. Is everything going okay?"

"Yeah, Jackson was helping me until he said that I was cheating." Sergei said with a small grin that told Isaac that the words were probably true.

"How does one cheat at this game?"

"By getting extra help from Stiles in Russian." Jackson said, without malice in his voice, while Stiles shot him a wink.

"I wasn't cheating, papa." Sergei began in English, before turning to him with a shy grin and finishing in Russian. "Ya prosto sprosil yego ne pokupat' Nidoking."

"Yeah, well..that's kind of cheating, Sergei." Isaac said, reproachfully, but with a smile that his son had told the truth. Still, it was a good opportunity to teach his son a life lesson. "Even though it was nice of Stiles to help you out, cheating isn't good."

"But I could have lost." Sergei protested, and Isaac shook his head.

"Then lose with grace. It's far better to maintain good sportsmanship when it comes to losing than to cheat to get there. Life isn't about shortcuts. Do you understand?"

Sergei nodded slowly, and looked up at Jackson. "I'm sorry, Jackson. I won't cheat, again."

"It's alright. It's just a game, but your father's lesson will be important as you get older." Jackson said, looking up at Isaac. Isaac nodded his head as a mark of

thanks. It was not as though Jackson was teaching Sergei a new lesson and usurping his role as father, but rather reinforcing one that Isaac had just set in place. Which was acceptable.

“I just stopped in to make sure that you’re alright, I’m going to play for a bit longer with Jordan.”

Scott snorted and it took only a moment for Isaac to realize what he had said, before he gave the man a severe look that clearly said: *No crassness in front of Sergei.*

Isaac headed into the kitchen for a glass of water when he heard the unmistakable sound of the awkward Stiles following him, which was perfect, seeing as he was the target of the irritation Isaac felt when he saw the clean room.

“Stiles, I told you I would do the dishes.” Isaac said, spinning around to face him. “I mean...cleaning dishes is something that I *am* capable of doing.”

“Oh, pish posh, Isaac. There will be plenty of dishes for you to wash later. How’s it going?” He asked with barely restrained excitement.

Isaac arched an eyebrow at him. “I’m not suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or anything.” He said, confused as to why Stiles seemed so thrilled. “So...it’s going as good as two friends playing a video game can go.”

Stiles’ smile dipped a little, but he shook his head. “It’s...never mind.”

Isaac chuckled and shook his head at his friend’s odd behavior. “How is Sergei doing?”

“Good.” Stiles said, looking a little distracted. “I’m sorry for letting him cheat, I just didn’t think that it would be that big of a deal since it’s just Monopoly.”

“It’s not, but...I still want him to grow up right. Which means no more cheating.”

Stiles quickly nodded. “Of course.”

Isaac left it at that. It hadn’t been such a major transgression that he wanted to

push the issue. He had gotten the point he wanted across.

“I’m going to head back, and thanks for doing the dishes, but next time...”

“Yes, yes, next time I’ll let you do whatever dishes you want.” Stiles dismissively, making Isaac sigh.

“I just want to contribute, man.”

Isaac returned to the game room with his water and the promise that Stiles would allow him to help around the house, if for nothing else, than so he didn’t feel like a leech.

“Is Sergei alright?”

“Well, he was caught cheating by Jackson, so I seized the opportunity to give him a lesson in life matters.”

Jordan chuckled. “I have no doubt that he’ll grow up fine. From what I’ve seen, you’ve been pretty great.”

“You’ve seen very little, Jordan. I’ve tried, but I don’t want the ease you see before you now to trick you into thinking that it wasn’t rough.” Isaac said, feeling a little defensive.

“I meant no disrespect, Isaac. I just think that he’s really awesome, and I know you did it on your own.”

Isaac smiled and took his spot next to Jordan, again. “Thanks. And...you know, sorry. I still feel that people look at me as a failure with him, because of what it came to. I’m a bit...thorny when it comes to compliments.”

“You really should work on that. I don’t think anyone here would ever give you a disingenuous compliment. *I* definitely wouldn’t.”

Isaac felt the sincerity of his words and couldn’t help but agree with them. It was hard for him to accept compliments, he was always looking for the hidden joke, but it seemed as though Jordan was serious.

“Since we’re being frank with one another...Can I say that, that we’re being

frank?”

“I’m always open for blunt openness.”

“I didn’t...” He paused, again, and put down his controller. “I didn’t only ask you here to play video games, there was something else I wanted to ask, too.”

“How I kept my hair so soft while I was poor?” Isaac asked, making a joke, but for once Jordan didn’t smile.

“Actually...I was wondering...Would you like to get a cup of coffee with me?” The words spilled from his mouth clumsily, and in one long string.

“Was that a question or are you epileptic?” Isaac asked, only partially joking.

“Sorry. That was nervousness. I don’t do this too often.” Jordan said, letting out an uneasy chuckle. “Let me try that again: Would you like to have a cup of coffee with me?”

Only the maintenance of the Jordan’s staid face kept Isaac from laughing. All the pomp of momentousness for that?

“It’s a little late...”

“I meant like...not coffee, but ‘coffee’.” He held up his fingers to frame the word ‘coffee’. “Isaac, I’m failing, terribly, but I’m trying to ask you out on a date.”

If it was anyone else, or even Jordan himself in another situation, Isaac would have sworn that he was joking, perhaps put up to it by Stiles or Derek, but he seemed to be sincere, and *that* made Isaac’s heart drop in nervousness.

Jordan was attractive and kind, and...so not the person that Isaac would have ever thought to ask him out. He seemed so...young. Responsible to be sure, but Isaac had a ton of baggage, almost literally, and he doubted that Jordan understood the gravity of that.

“Uh...you’re kind of being quiet.” Jordan said with a nervy chuckle.

“I’m sorry, it’s just...That kind of a big question.” Jordan’s face creased, and

Isaac shook his head. “Not because of you...exactly, it’s just...just coffee, but it’s such a frakking complicated thing, Jordan.”

“Because of Sergei?”

Isaac nodded slowly. “Because of Sergei and...because the last time that I went on an actual date, Sergei was the result, it’s been that long.”

“I just...You’re funny, strong, and...if I can be a little shallow, you’re handsome, too. I haven’t known you very long, and I’d understand if you said no, but I would really appreciate it.”

“Sergei...” Isaac began.

Jordan held up his hands, smiling again. “Obviously when I asked you, I assumed he’d be going, too. I get it, man, you’re a packaged set. There’s really no one would could doubt that by taking one look at the two of you and I wouldn’t dream of asking you out without knowing that Sergei trusted it.”

Isaac smiled. “You’re serious, aren’t you? You want to ask me out? Me: the jobless, single father of a seven year old?”

“No, I want to ask the highly capable, single father of a seven year old out. Perspective is everything, Isaac.” Jordan seemed to be slipping back into his old self as Isaac had not rejected the offer, and in all honesty, he didn’t want to. As long as Jordan knew what he was getting into, Isaac was, himself excited. He didn’t hold any long term expectations, it was just a simple date, but at the same time it was a lot more than that. It was a sign of hope, of a second light at the end of the tunnel, of being *liked* by someone.

“Coffee?” He asked, maintaining a small smirk.

“Or tea, if you prefer, or a slushie, or carrots, as long as you say yes...if that’s what you want.”

“Then, yes.” Isaac said, his eyes turning to Jordan’s. “I’ll go have carrots with you...if Sergei agrees.”

Jordan let out a bark of laughter. “Awesome, you won’t regret it, I promise. We can go wherever you want.”

While Isaac was pretty sure that Jordan knew what he was getting into, but just because he'd been asked on his first date in a long time, didn't mean that he was going to let his guard down.

"Well, it shouldn't be tonight, since we kind of already ate, but let me ask Sergei where he'd like to go."

Jordan didn't seem phased at all. "Sounds like a plan." He still looked as though Isaac had answered all his prayers and dreams, and the effect was rather infectious.

Isaac had a date, with an actual human being, who knew and accepted that he had a son. He let the gravity of that wash over him for a moment, before he put some of the pieces together.

Stiles had known...or guessed...or concocted. In any case, he *had* been pressing Isaac to reveal anything that might have happened between him and Jordan, and that made Isaac feel a little like an idiot. If he hadn't built such a defense around himself, he might have seen it, too.

Notes for the Chapter:

Ya prosto sprosil yego ne pokupat' Nidoking = I just asked him not to buy Nidoking.

Why another chapter? Because I feel so guilty about my other fic and finals, so here you go. Writing Jordan, Isaac, and Sergei is so much fun.

18. Envy

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac asks Sergei if their date would be okay with him and they spend a day together.

Isaac

Isaac had always found himself unable to keep many secrets from Sergei. There was the occasional white lie he told, and when he had arrived in Beacon Hills he had concealed how ill he was in order to not worry his son, but a date with the deputy was certainly something that could not be so hidden.

His son looked so happy, sitting with Allison, Jackson, and Scott while they played Sorry. The others were at the dinner table, in a game of poker, and when Isaac approached, Sergei looked up.

“I promise, papa, I wasn’t cheating.”

“I know, you’re a good kid. There’s something I need to talk to you about, though, do you think your friends could spare you for a moment?”

Sergei didn’t even ask, he stood up and ran up to Isaac, making Isaac chuckle.

“I’ll bring him right back.” He promised, and the three that Sergei had left nodded in an easy acceptance.

“Is something wrong, papa?” Sergei asked while Isaac led him back to the room with Jordan. He looked a little nervous, but Isaac put a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

“Nothing is wrong, but Jordan asked me something, and it didn’t feel right accepting without asking you first.”

“What did he ask?” Sergei asked, his nervousness abating somewhat.

Isaac motioned with his head to Jordan, who nodded. “I asked your father out on a date, and if it’s okay with you, I’d like for you to come along with us.”

“A date? Why would you ask my papa out on a date?”

“Because...” It was obvious that he had not expected an interrogation, and Isaac opened his mouth to tell Sergei to be kinder, but Jordan answered.

“Because he’s funny and kind. Because he raised you and you’re a pretty awesome young man.” Jordan’s eyes slide upwards to Isaac, who was blushing. “Because he doesn’t always see himself in the same light that I do, and that’s something of a crime.”

Sergei stared at Jordan with critical eyes. “Will you try to take him away?”

“I would never try to separate you from your father. You two are a team, I just want to spend some time with it.”

For a moment, the room was quiet, while Isaac was actually nervous that his son might reject the offer. He had already shown his displeasure with Stiles for *thinking* that he wanted to date Isaac.

Finally, Sergei spoke:

“You forgot to mention that my papa is handsome.”

“He is. Probably the most handsome man in the town.”

Isaac’s cheeks ignited at the compliment.

“If you take my papa away, I will never like you again.” Sergei warned, and Jordan grinned.

“I promise not to.”

“Then you can date my papa.”

Jordan smiled widely, and Isaac couldn’t help but join him, because although it was ridiculous, he wouldn’t have agreed if Sergei had not.

“Thank you, Seryozha, I promise that you won’t regret that decision.” Jordan said. “The only thing left to decide is where you want to go.”

“I can pick the place?” Sergei asked, his seriousness being replaced with

amazement.

“Of course, you can.”

“Can we have a picnic?” Sergei asked, immediately, as though he had given thought to the matter before.

“A picnic for a first date? That sounds like an excellent idea. It will be a little late, I have a shift tomorrow morning.”

“It’s...I’m not going anywhere, we could wait until next week.” Isaac suggested, not wanting the man to end up being tired on the job. Sergei at the park...that was going to take some energy.

“Ah, don’t make me wait?” Jordan begged a little, making effective use of his eyes which made Isaac’s heart flutter wildly.

“It’s just...this little guy’s going to be...he’s a kid, he’s got a lot of energy.”

“And I’m an old man?” Jordan asked, raising an eyebrow, though with a cocky grin that told Isaac that he was willing to take on the challenge of a day at work followed by chasing a hyperactive child around the park.

“You don’t look that old, Mr. Parrish.” Sergei said, cocking his head as though the joke had gone over his head.

“That’s because I’m a strapping young lad who can handle a shift at work and then hanging out after.”

It was true, and Isaac realized that he often saw an age disparity between himself and the deputy because of Jordan’s position. If Isaac could handle a rigorous day with his son, he was sure that Jordan would be able to, too.

And the thought was wholly awesome and perfect. Sergei had okayed him, and Jordan seemed to fully accept the responsibilities in dating a man who had a son. He had an actual scheduled date, and it was a type of happiness that he was thoroughly unfamiliar with. Giddy schoolgirl might be an accurate way to describe him, no matter how much harm it did to his ego.

Jordan looked equally pleased, and though he was explaining what ‘strapping’

meant to Sergei, he kept flashing his eyes up to Isaac, who blushed under them.

“Thanks, again, and I’ll...pick you up, tomorrow, right?” Jordan asked, an hour later when he was departing for the evening. Isaac had already sent Sergei to bed, which gave him license to show just how thrilled he was with Jordan. He was leaning against the doorjamb and trying to prolong their moment together.

“Absolutely. I’m looking forward to it.” Isaac said.

“Would it be alright if...” Jordan sighed and scratched the back of his head. “Can I take a little something to hold me over?”

“What do you mean?” Isaac asked, feeling a little suspicious, but his face lighting up like a beacon when Jordan showed what he meant. It wasn’t a deep French kiss, indeed, Jordan’s lips didn’t touch his own, but they grazed for a moment against Isaac’s jaw, making Isaac feel as though he had just taken a shot of vodka or whisky. The warmth he felt was certainly something and if Jordan was feeling it, too, Isaac understood what he meant about taking something, because there really was something nice about it.

“Thank you.” Jordan said, with his normal grin, though something seemed a little brighter about it. Maybe it was all in Isaac’s head, maybe he was taking things out of context, but he truly believed that he had given a gift of sorts to Jordan by allowing the man to kiss him, and received one in return.

If Isaac was a giddy schoolgirl at the prospect of his date, Stiles certainly changed that by taking the role upon himself. He was sitting cross-legged on the couch, bouncing up and down when Isaac shut the door.

“Am I right or am I the undisputed king of being right?” He asked with a cackle while Isaac blushed.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about and I refuse to give you the crown of being right.” He argued.

“Oh, come on! You have a date! With Parrish! I believe I specifically said that he would like you and that having a son wouldn’t change things for him.”

“We have a date, Stiles. A picnic in the park, it’s hardly what you call a marriage.”

“And what is this, Imperial Russia? Marriages aren’t arranged, they have to come from something, and a date is something!”

Isaac had to admit, a date could lead to a lot of things, and even though it hadn’t happened yet, he had high hopes of Jordan. Of course, it would lead to a complete lack of trust if he broke those expectations by being cruel to Sergei or eventually realizing that he didn’t want to raise a child, or that Isaac simply wasn’t someone he was compatible with, but considering how good Jordan was with Sergei, Isaac decided to give the man a chance. He’d actually attempt optimism, which wasn’t hard these days, not with Stiles and Derek providing him with a financial backing, his son accepting his new home, and Isaac actually able to provide for him.

“Though I’m not demanding monarchies for it, even I have to admit, this is a little exciting, Isaac.” Derek said with a smirk. “Stiles said that you were nervous about dating.”

“Not nervous...just...look, there’s so much more to dating a father than dating someone without any baggage. I have approximately all the baggage, and I didn’t think that anyone would want to pick it up with me.”

“Yeah, but you’re a cute guy with adorable baggage, and Jordan’s pretty strong.” Stiles said. “I mean...did you see his muscles?”

Isaac looked at Derek to see if he was alright with Stiles speaking about another man in such a way, but Derek merely nodded as though he could appreciate Jordan’s attractiveness.

And fuck was Jordan attractive. Soft, brunette hair, the way his lips looked so perfect when they were curled up in a smile, which was very often. The way his beard poked out, even though he was clean shaven, providing a true shadow to his face, the bob of his Adam’s apple as he spoke, and his eyes. Isaac may have thought that they were green, and they were, but whenever they caught the light, they took on an almost hematite quality.

Which wasn’t to say that Isaac didn’t enjoy Parrish for more than just his looks, because he did, but as far as being shallow went, there was a veritable feast when it came to one Jordan Parrish.

“See, babe? That, right there is what I’m talking about.” Stiles said, snapping

Isaac from his thoughts, only to find the two staring at him.

“What?” Isaac said, turning red from embarrassment.

“I told Derek that you look so much happier and content than when we picked you up from the hospital, but this...When you’re thinking about him, it’s like you’re radioactive in your glow.”

“Can a kiss get a man pregnant?” Derek asked, playfully teasing.

“Only with anticipation.” Isaac said, letting them have their fun, because it *was* fun. And he *was* happy, it seemed that everything in his life was making a turn around, and that was really what he needed.

Isaac still bore a smile twenty minutes later when he decided to head to bed, planning on at least making the picnic basket for his date. When he got to his room and threw himself backwards on his bed, he felt like he was finally getting himself into a groove where his life was working out perfectly.

Sergei didn’t join him that night, and that was perfectly acceptable, it meant that he was settling, too.

Isaac slept soundly, his dreams full of sunshine, clouds, and a particular deputy who had smiled and given him a chance.

#

Isaac

Isaac awoke to Sergei jumping into bed with him. Literally jumping, which was jarring to say the least, but Isaac was quick to forgive.

“Prosnut'sya, papa!” Was Sergei’s battle cry, making Isaac chuckle, and cover his head with his blanket.

“I can’t. You have killed me, Seryozha.” Isaac said, drastically, lolling his tongue out and closing his eyes.

“Nyet, papa! Ne umiray! Vy dolzhny prosnut'sya i kormit' menya!”

“Is that why you woke me up?”

Sergei nodded and Isaac placed a kiss on the side of his head. “You don’t have to wake me up, son. This is your house, too, you can get cereal for yourself.”

“But you said that the kitchen could be dangerous.” Sergei said, wisely, making an excellent point, and one that Isaac wouldn’t revoke.

“It *can* be if you’re cooking hot things, like ramen or something with oil, but cereal is safe, just make sure that you clean your mess if you leave one, okay?”

Sergei nodded, and hurried off his footsteps thundering down the hall, and Isaac truly hoped that Stiles and Derek were already at work, or at least awake. He checked his phone, and reasoned that they must be since he had slept in so long, it was already ten.

Isaac may have been freed from the drudgery of work, but was still able to snap to attention as though he still had a job. Pulling on a pair of his lounge pants, he traced Sergei’s steps into the kitchen.

“Papa, this was on the table for you.” Sergei said, sliding a note, and envelop, and a grouping of flowers across the breakfast bar to Isaac, absentmindedly. Isaac felt it was a little odd that Stiles would have left him flowers, but read the note before he opened the envelope.

Isaac, these were on the step, this morning, I have to assume they’re for you.

Have a great day,

Stiles

Isaac looked down at the envelope and the reason Stiles thought it was for him was obvious. Written on the front in bold was:

Исаак

The Cyrillic form of his name. He still smiled, though. It seemed to be par on the course for Jordan who had impressed Isaac with his knowledge of Russian with each of their meetings. The letter inside followed this pattern, as well. It was in English, short, and simple:

Isaac,

I think it was amazing watching you last night, and I look forward to seeing you and Sergei, again.

It wasn't signed, but Isaac knew that it had to be Jordan, who else was going to be seeing him? The flowers; green gardenias were fragrant, and though Isaac had not had the experience to be one who liked flowers, he enjoyed the gesture, nonetheless, and quickly found a vase for them to be placed in.

"Did Mr. Parrish give you those?" Sergei asked, and Isaac nodded.

"He did. He's treating us very kindly, Seryozha."

Sergei shrugged as though he didn't grasp the finer points of romantic affection, which Isaac really couldn't blame him for.

"He brings me Skittles and makes you smile, so I guess he's okay."

Isaac thought he was certainly more than 'okay', but if Sergei wasn't going to antagonize the situation that was good enough for Isaac.

"Do we have anything to do today, papa, or can I play video games when I'm done?"

"I was hoping that you'd go to the store with me so I could get a few things for our picnic today, and then while I'm cooking, you can play to your heart's content." Isaac said, though realizing as he did that he should probably get a cell phone while he was out, as well. He didn't feel comfortable enough to leave Sergei alone, yet. "And maybe I should get a phone."

"Ya mogu imet' odin tozhe?" Sergei asked with a chuckle, and Isaac let out a laugh, kissing the top of his son's head. It seemed as though his son was kidding, but it did trigger a consideration in his brain. Not a top of the line model, but something so that Sergei could reach him in an emergency wasn't such a crazy idea.

"Actually, Sergei...I'm not making any promises, but it's something we can look into."

“Papa, ya poshutil. You don’t have to get me one.”

“Well, you’re a bit older, now. You can have a little more responsibility, and since you’re going to school soon, I would feel a lot safer if you had one.” Isaac said, sitting down next to him. “You’d have to be responsible, though, and take care of it.”

Sergei shook his head, though. “Papa, I don’t want one. The kids at school were mean and I...I don’t want to be like them.”

Isaac felt his heart swell at his son’s selflessness, but this wasn’t a moment for such things. Sergei deserved to be rewarded for so many things, and Isaac was going to do that, if for no other reason than it would make him feel better. The incident at the mall and grocery store still prickled against his paternal instincts, and giving his son a means to communicate would go a long way to assuage those fears.

After ensuring that Sergei had cleaned up his mess, they were off. Isaac wasn’t sure what he was going to make, but if Jordan had made the effort to drive over in the morning to drop off flowers, he could make an effort to provide the man with a good meal.

“Were Stiles and Derek awake when you got up?” Isaac asked to break the silence.

Sergei nodded. “Derek showed me how to control the T.V. before he left. I waited until I was hungry to wake you up. Was that bad?” He asked, sounding worried.

“Not at all. How boring would it be to lay in bed and stare at the ceiling, I’m just curious if everything is going okay with him and Stiles. Are you feeling more comfortable around them?”

“Derek is really funny. I called him dyadya this morning and he thought I said ‘dada’ and his face was funny. Dyadya Stiles explained, though and he said that he was honored.”

Isaac was touched that the three of them had formed a bond, and found Sergei’s story a little funny.

“So they don’t mind being your uncles?”

Sergei shook his head. “Stiles said: ‘sem'ya eto to, chto vy dela eto’, but I think he meant; Sem'ya eto to, chto vy delayete eto.”

“He did.” Isaac said nodding. “We have to make our own family Sergei, and since we only have each other, it can’t hurt to adopt a few new uncles.” Isaac worried if Sergei would ask about the role that Jordan would play, and that scared him, because he didn’t know. He wasn’t meant to know and that’s part of why relationships were so scary. He didn’t, though.

“Who taught him Russian?”

“I taught him a lot, but he also learned from his mother when she was still alive. It’s part of the reason that we became friends. No one could pronounce Gennadij when we were growing up.”

“Gennadij...Gennadij...” Sergei whispered. “It’s not that hard, papa.” He finally said, and Isaac let out a bark of laughter.

“Sergei, we didn’t have a lot of money, but you still have advantages. You’re going to learn that not everyone can speak the way you can, not everyone thinks like you, and you know what? That’s okay. Some people are different, and we need different people to make the world interesting.”

“But...people wouldn’t be mean if we weren’t different, papa.” It was the truth, and Isaac couldn’t argue against that.

“Am I like Stiles or Derek or Jordan?” Isaac asked as he pulled into the parking lot of the mall.

Sergei thought for a moment before shaking his head.

Isaac turned to him. “Sergei, the world can be a cruel and nasty place, alright? You know that first hand, and I’m sorry for that.” Sergei opened his mouth, but Isaac shook his head. “Sergei, there’s good in it too, though. Stiles, Derek, Jordan...everyone you met last night? Those are all good things. The fact...the fact that you woke up this morning and had Lucky Charms? A good thing. We have differences Sergei, and that’s pretty awesome sometimes. Because how we were living, you couldn’t see that, Seryozha, but I promise this world is a

beautiful place, and you're going to learn that, alright?"

Sergei nodded. "I will, papa. You, Derek, Stiles, and Jordan showed me that. Even Gladys was kind. I just...I don't like being made fun of, papa."

"No one does, Seryozha, but you're smart, and one day you're going to be something amazing. Anything you want to do, you can do it, and the people who are mean? They become gas station attendants or rich CEOs who go to jail for something stupid. Men like you, though? Ah, frak, Sergei. You're going to be something special."

Sergei was grinning broadly. "Ty luchshe, papa." He said, leaning across the console to hug him.

"Nyet. Ty lusche, Seryozha." Isaac whispered to him. "Now, let's go get us some new phones."

Even when he had money to spend, Isaac still despised kiosk salesmen. He felt as though they were vultures, seeking to pick on the people they viewed as weak, and since Isaac wasn't back to his healthy weight, he imagined he looked weak.

"Sir, have you thought of changing your carrier?"

"Sir, look at these rings, your girlfriend would love them."

"Sir, your skin could be softer."

"Sir-." A fourth one began, but Isaac, holding onto Sergei's hand, turned to face him.

"Ya ne govoryu po-angliyski." Oh, yes, second languages had their uses, especially when the man blinked stupidly at him, before turning to pounce on a passing woman like she was prey.

"Papa, that was a lie."

"Yes it was, but sometimes a tiny white lie is okay." Isaac said with a chuckle. He figured it was better to instill a tiny bad lesson in his son than to be hypocritical in front of him. Sergei let out a conspiratorial giggle, and Isaac steered him towards the Best Buy Mobile, noticing how Sergei's eyes fell on the

Dip n' Dots next door. Personally, he hated the things, but he supposed that it couldn't hurt if he bought his son the treat as they were leaving.

The salesman looked familiar, but Isaac couldn't quite place him. The muscled build and boyish looks certainly belonged in an Abercrombie and Fitch store rather than a phone, but Isaac wasn't about to admit to either of those things. Instead, he matched the man's friendly grin.

"Hi, my name is Ethan, if there's anything you need, please don't hesitate to ask."

"Actually, yes. I'm needing a new phone." Isaac explained pulling out his battered phone with a grimace of shame, which Ethan didn't match, he seemed to be too friendly for that. "I also wanted to get something for my son, but..." Isaac began, but Ethan seemed to get exactly what he was talking about.

"You want a phone for him, but you don't feel like he's old enough to have one like you?" Isaac nodded, grateful for the man's easy demeanor.

"Well, we have this one." Ethan said, leading Isaac to a display.

Notes for the Chapter:

Prosnut'sya, papa! = Wake up, Papa!

"Nyet, papa! Ne umiray! Vy dolzhny prosnut'sya i kormit' menya! = No, papa! Do not die! You have to wake up and feed me!

Ya mogu imet' odin tozhe = Can I have one, too?

Papa, ya poshutil = Papa, I was joking.

Ty luchshe = I love you.

Ya ne govoryu po-angliyski = I don't speak English.

Last day of finals, so tomorrow, I'll begin working on another chapter for my other fic, I'm giving this as a peace offering.

thank you everyone for your encouragement, I really appreciate it.

19. Lessons My Babushka Taught Me

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac prepares for his date.

Isaac

Sergei was practically vibrating with his excitement as he played on his new phone. While Isaac got one called the Edge, Sergei's was called the Kurio, and they were quite different. Ethan had been more than helpful, tying the two phones together. Isaac's could track Sergei's anywhere, even if it was off. Sergei also had the ability to play games, surf the web, call, and text message, but only within certain guidelines, something that Isaac found really interesting. It gave Sergei another outlet, made Isaac feel more secure, but didn't allow him to go too far. Isaac knew one day Sergei would grow up and find either men or women attractive, watch porn, and befriend people that Isaac found less than acceptable, but for the moment, he was able to let Sergei have his fun, and still keep an eye on him.

"Spasibo, papa! Spasibo!" Sergei repeated for the fiftieth time, and Isaac just grinned.

"You're more than welcome, Seryozha. But remember what we talked about." He had given Sergei very clear guidelines for his new phone. In all actuality, he didn't have to set that many. All phone numbers had to be approved by Isaac, but Sergei was still told to be wary, and to be careful with it.

"I promise to be careful, papa."

"That's my boy." Isaac said with pride in his voice. That Sergei had only asked jokingly and seemed so happy to receive his gift made it all worth it. Everything in Sergei's life had been a struggle, and Isaac was more than pleased to make his glide to an easier lie as smooth as possible.

Which included ice cream, naturally.

"So, what should I make the deputy for our picnic?"

Sergei thought for a moment before speaking a bit hesitantly.

“You said that babushka told you the recipe for the stew you made last night, right?” Sergei’s hesitation must have been because he didn’t want to mention his grandmother, something that always seemed to bring a note of sadness to Isaac, and this time was no different, but he held himself together.

“Yeah.”

“Did she teach you to make anything else?”

Isaac nodded. “I do. I used to make Russian food for you when you were very little, do you remember that?”

Sergei thought for a moment before nodding. “I remember bread with onions and thin pancakes.” He finally declared.

“Piroshky and blini.” Isaac said, nodding. It wasn’t terrible as far as ideas went, to make Jordan a Russian meal, something that was inherently *Isaac*, and hopefully delicious at the same time.

“You’re pretty amazing, son, have I told you that?”

“Not since we were coming to town, papa.”

“Well, you are. And that’s exactly what we’re going to do...Well, *I’m* going to do.” He clarified. “I believe I promised you a day of video games.”

“I can help, papa. You got me something, can I return the favor?”

Isaac was touched, but he shook his head. “Son, school starts before you know it, enjoy this free time.”

“But I should learn, too, right? If babushka thought it was important, then I should learn, right? And we couldn’t afford it before, so I should learn now, like I learned Russian.”

Isaac would spend the rest of his life as a father and never stop being amazed at his son.

So they did. They spent the day making Russian food for their picnic, with Isaac showing him the amounts, Sergei always asking if Isaac needed a measuring cup or a recipe, and Isaac always shook his head.

“Food...good food, comes from the heart. Everything that your babushka taught me, I keep in here.” Isaac said, pointing to his chest.

They made pelmeni, meat dumplings, piroshky, bread stuffed with onions and Swiss cheese, and vatrushka a soft pastry filled with cream cheese. Isaac sent Sergei to the game room while he cleaned up, and just as Isaac was pulling the bread from the oven, Stiles came through the door.

“Ah, frak, man, that smells delicious.” Stiles whined. “Why don’t I get to date you?”

“Because I’m much too awesome for you.” Isaac said with a grin, pointing to the second set of food he had made for his roommates.

Stiles laughed and dropped his bag off on the couch before running forward. “I acknowledge your awesomeness and hereby submit myself as your eternal servant as long as I receive food once a week.”

“That’s an acceptable compromise. A slave...considering I was dirt poor a week ago, I think I might end up with a reality show.”

Stiles smirked. “You really didn’t have to do this. Derek and I could have made something.”

“Do you remember that long conversation about this being my home now? Or this morning when you let my son call you and Derek dyadya?” Stiles nodded. “I cook for my family. Before, that was just ramen for Sergei. Now, that means Russian food for you guys...and Jordan.” He added with a blush.

“Jordan’s not family?” Stiles asked, wagging his eyebrows in a lascivious manner.

“Iisus, Stiles, it’s only the first date. Don’t go scaring him away...it’s-.”

“Say no more, I’ll keep my often over enthused energy under control. You think you could really like him, though?”

“Yeah...” Isaac said with a laugh. He nodded to the flowers. “Did you see those? Do you know the last time I got flowers? Besides my mother’s funeral...never.”

“He’s certainly got a... seksual'nost' about him.” Stiles said, looking around for Sergei.

“And you.” Isaac said, and reminder sparking in his brain. “You...told me.”

“Well, I wasn’t going to play the ‘I told you so’ card, but a big I told you so it would be, because tell you, I most certainly did.”

Isaac laughed. “He’s not...he’s not just dating me because you asked him to, right?” A sudden fear made itself known, but Stiles shook his head and held up his hands.

“I absolutely did not, Isaac, I swear to you. All I did was tell him that you swung towards guys, too. Everything else is all him.”

Whatever fear Isaac had had was quickly extinguished by those words. Stiles hadn’t done anything, except tell Parrish that he was gay. Isaac had landed a man mostly on his own, and that’s probably why Stiles was laughing at him.

“If you look any smugger, you’re going to have a hard time getting your head out of the door. You’re hot, man, I could have told you that.”

“There’s...there’s a certain...I don’t know insecurity? I think that’s word I want.” Isaac said, shaking his head. “Anyways, when it comes to being a single father, there’s some insecurity that comes, or maybe that’s just me.”

“I think the fact that you think it’s just you is proof that there’s some insecurity issues here. Dude, we all feel like we’re undatable, and then you have the added complication of Sergei-.” Isaac opened his mouth angrily, but Stiles shook his head. “Dyadya Stiles here, remember? I didn’t say it was bad just that you put everything into him, and then you look up and years have passed since you even looked at another man. And then one sees you, and you’re a little shocked, it’s natural. Look at me and Derek, I mean...*me* and frakking *Derek Hale*. Who saw that coming? And you and Parrish go together far better than Derek and I do...or did, I did a lot of work.”

It was a rant, but there were some mighty big pearls of wisdom in it.

“You’re right, man. I...Why’d you do the school thing? You should have been a counselor, I could’ve used you in high school.”

“You had me in high school, and once was enough...” Stiles paused for a moment, before he let out a whoop. “Dude, your food made me forget. Look at this!” He ran to his bag and pulled out a stack of papers. “You’ll never guess what local community college is missing a philosophy professor?”

Isaac felt his heart thump painfully fast in his chest as he processed those words.

“Are you serious?”

“Well...not exactly, but yes.” Stiles admitted, and that was the moment that Isaac was lost.

“I’m glad that wasn’t extremely vague, because that could have been annoying.”

“Well, here’s the thing, we don’t exactly have a class for philosophy. This is Beacon Hills, we have people looking for something...”

“More practical?” Isaac offered, and Stiles nodded. Isaac wasn’t offended, philosophy had been a terrible choice.

“But, I talked to the dean, told him what was going without going into too many details. Believe me, he tried to pry, though, so watch out for that shitake. I mean, he feels like he needs to know-.”

“Stiles, babbling.” Isaac practically whined as he bounced in excitement, waiting for Stiles to get to his point.

“Right, sorry. He said that we could add another class, but he wants to interview you first, but I know you, man, and I know that you’ll be awesome, and....I think you got a frakking job!” He finished.

Isaac whooped and pulled Stiles into a tight hug. “Thank you, man...I mean...you don’t know what this means to me.”

“Considering that my ribs are breaking, I think I do.” Stiles said with a wheezy laugh, and that was him being himself, but Isaac was on the verge of tears. This was it, the way that he was going to provide for his son in the future. He was

secure, at last.

“Okay, so your interview isn’t for a few weeks, but I got your application. When you get home from your...date,” he wiggled his eyebrows, again, “I’ll help you fill out. How does that sound?”

“Like shitake’s finally turning around for me, for us.” He added, nodding towards the game room. “You’ve saved my life Stiles, and there’s...there’s going to be something that I do for you one day. *Thank you.*”

“Anytime, brother. But tell you what, we’ll work out how you can pay me back...I’m thinking it might be time to revive pranking.”

“Seriously, babe, how old are you?” Derek asked walking through the door.

“Old enough to be legal, but young enough to be fun.” Stiles answered without even looking surprised at his husband’s appearance.

“Do you want to be fired for playing pranks on Jackson?” At Isaac’s confused look, Derek dropped his bag and explained. “Stiles messed with Jackson for about a year, before he threatened to get him into trouble.”

“But now with you there, he won’t be able to tell for sure if it’s you or me.” Stiles finished, and Isaac could only laugh at his friend’s immature antics.

“Let me get the job first before you get me fired?” Isaac requested.

“Alright.” But from the look on his face, Isaac could tell that he was eager.

Derek shook his head. “Is that your dinner?” He asked, looking to the food on the counter.

“For us, too. Isaac made enough for everyone.” Stiles explained.

“You didn’t have...thank you, Isaac.” Derek said with a small grin, and Isaac nodded.

“Are you nervous?” Derek asked, and Isaac squirmed a little.

“Maybe? I’m more excited than nervous, but...yeah, I guess, a little.”

“I hope you don’t mind, I told Derek what you told me...” Stiles said, shifting uncomfortably, but Isaac didn’t. Stiles was playing with the rules they had invented when they were children, nothing was a secret unless it was declared as such. And Isaac really didn’t mind Derek knowing this was his first date in a long time.

“I don’t get why people are so cruel. I think that Sergei’s a great kid, and any man who missed a shot with you and him is crazy.”

Isaac blushed and smiled.

When the knock came at the door, Isaac jumped and bit his lip. Maybe he was a little more nervous than he had let on, but Stiles just sighed and went to open it.

Notes for the Chapter:

Spasibo = Thank you

Iisus = Jesus

seksual'nost = sexiness

So, this should end up being massive, I mean like MASSIVE, so...yeah.

As always, asking for feedback.

Thank you

20. Sense of Security

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan reveals something that shatters Isaac's world

Isaac

Isaac wasn't a kinky man, maybe a foot fetish video here or there, and there was that time that Danny had handcuffed him to his headboard...

But he wouldn't call himself a fetish oriented person.

That being established, Isaac couldn't help but feel a new twinge of desire run through him when Jordan stood before him in his uniform, grinning broadly like always. His long day didn't seem to have wearied him in the slightest, and he held out a rose to Isaac, before sniffing the air.

"That smells really good. What did you make?"

Isaac explained the food with a blush, laughing when Parrish made a pained look.

"That sounds great, I'm starving. All I had all day was a donut, and Stiles if you say a word, I Swear to God, I will have your jeep towed, right now."

Stiles made a mock hurt face. "I wasn't going to say anything." But the wicked glint in his eyes revealed his lie.

"My ass, you weren't. Your father has told me some stories..." He paused when he looked at Isaac. "Every time, man, that blush..."

Which, of course, made Isaac blush even deeper, and he turned to the kitchen, using packing their basket as an excuse to hide a face that was no doubt as red as the rose in Jordan's hands.

Jordan didn't let him escape that easily, though. He followed Isaac, and leaned over to place a kiss on his cheek.

“You shouldn’t hide it, it’s...beautiful.” He whispered.

Isaac turned to Parrish and opened his mouth, only to have his response drowned out by Sergei running from the room.

“Papa, Mr. Parrish is here!” He called, making everyone laugh.

“I know, Seryozha, and he’s-.”

“Got more Skittles for you!” Parrish said, pulling the pack out of his pocket, and handing them to an excited Sergei.

“Jordan, you didn’t-.”

“I know.” Jordan said, interrupting Isaac for the second time, but with a soft voice and no malicious intent. “But, like always, it’s because I wanted to. Just like this.” He said, handing the rose to Isaac, who took it gleefully and smelled it. It smelled sweet, but Isaac enjoyed what it mean more than the scent.

“Look at you, Mr. Lahey, building up quite a collection, there.”

Jordan’s eyes darkened in confusion. “What do you mean?” He asked, and there was something akin to hurt there, and though Stiles had said that Isaac was collecting lovers.

Isaac was quick to reassure him. “He’s talking about these, you sent them this morning.” Isaac said, picking up the vase of gardenias.

Jordan didn’t smile, his eyes went from Isaac to Stiles as though he expected one of them to say something.

“Isaac...you’re not dating someone else, are you?” He finally asked, and Isaac immediately shook his head.

“No, what are you...Jordan, it was hard enough getting one man to ask me out, who else would I be dating?”

Jordan’s eyes went from suspicious to worried. “Isaac, I didn’t send you any other flowers, this was the first.”

SMASH!

Isaac dropped the vase sending a wave of cold water over his socks, getting them wet, but he hardly felt it. Hell, he could hardly breathe.

The note, the flowers, they had made sense when Isaac thought that it had been Jordan who sent them, but if he hadn't...

Isaac's vision began to blur and his head swam and he collapsed to the ground in a panic. He could see his friends and his son rushing forward, worried looks on their faces, but he couldn't grasp what they were saying or respond to them in any way. The world was a blur of color and shadow, and it might as well have been water, too, for as much as he tried, Isaac couldn't get a breath in.

It was Stiles who finally saved him, the sharp blow across his cheek, made Isaac let out a strangled cry, but it also allowed him to suck in oxygen. Deep, ragged breaths tore their way through his throat and lungs, and allowed him to refocus on the world...*his* world, which was Sergei.

His son stood behind Derek in a way to suggest the man had pulled him behind his legs as to not witness what Isaac was going through. Isaac held out his arms, and Sergei made to run into them, but Jordan, quickly blocked him, making Stiles, Derek, and Isaac look at him with confusion and worry.

"There's glass, Isaac, he could cut himself." Jordan explained, and when Isaac looked down, there was indeed glass, like tiny crystals strewn throughout the water. In fact, there seemed to be a steady stream of red running into the water, and when Isaac moved his leg, he felt a sharp prickle of pain shoot through his leg.

"Sh...oh, no." Parrish said, handing Sergei off to Derek, before moving forward, his boot crunching the glass. Jordan certainly wasn't as important as Sergei, but Isaac wasn't frightened of his presence, in fact, the man became business like immediately, and it was calming.

Instead of treating Isaac where he was, he scooped him up and brought him to the island, his eyes daring Stiles to say something, but he just nodded encouragingly. Isaac would never admit to how safe he felt in those arms, especially considering how raw and vulnerable the revelation had made him feel, and he could only feel better when Derek brought Sergei to the island and lifted

him up so they were sitting next to each other. Isaac wasted no time in wrapping his arms around his son and holding him close, hating how his son was shaking with fear. Jordan turned to leave the room, and Isaac felt a little cold with him there.

“Papa, chto sluchilos'?” Sergei whispered, his voice full of fear, and Isaac didn't blame him. He had had a panic attack, screamed, cut himself, and then Jordan had blocked him, there was no doubt that Sergei was going to need some time to calm down.

“I...something scared me, Seryozha, so I had a little accident.” Isaac lied. “I... I'm sorry if I scared *you*.”

“Vy krichali, papa. Pochemu ty krichish'?” Isaac could see Stiles quietly translating to Derek, his eyes narrowed in anger, which confused Isaac. *He* should be the one who was angry, Stiles didn't have some sick freak leaving disconcerting notes for him.

“Because...because the glass cut my leg.” Isaac said, it was another lie but there was no way in hell that he was going to tell the truth, it'd serve no purpose other than to frighten Sergei, who didn't need that kind of burden. As an afterthought, he added: “That's also why Jordan stopped you from going into the kitchen. He wasn't trying to keep us apart, he just wanted you not to cut your feet.” It was absolutely crucial that Sergei understood that Jordan was not there to be a wall between them.

“Ya tol'ko khotel, chtoby dat' vam obnyat'.” Sergei argued.

“I know, but that glass is sharp, and it would have cut you.” Isaac repeated. There was a dam within him that was barely being kept together, the only thing maintaining his façade was his need to protect Sergei. There was someone who was fucking with them, and Isaac didn't know what to do, until he felt a sharp pain in his leg, and he looked up to see Jordan using a pair of tweezers to pull pieces of glass from his leg.

Like Stiles, Jordan seemed mad, he was glaring at the wound on Isaac's leg, though he was gentle as he plucked shards out.

“I'm...I'm sorry.” Isaac whispered. “This is *not* how I imagined our first date going.”

“Me neither.” He huffed, and that was when Isaac felt cold. If a man wasn’t running away from his son, he was getting cranky that Isaac had been a fool enough to collapse into a sobbing mess in a pile of glass.

Isaac reached out and stilled Jordan’s hands, only to find them shaking. He tried to pry the tweezers from the man’s grip, but Jordan looked up, his eyes softening a little when they found Isaac’s.

“What are you doing?” He asked.

“You’re...mad, and I’m not going to force you to stay here. Why don’t you go home, and you can...whatever.” Isaac finished a little lamely, but not really feeling the energy necessary to make excuses for Jordan, who no doubt would start running from the house...any moment now.

As the seconds ticked by, though, Jordan didn’t move, except to cock his head.

“Alright, I’m angry, I’m damned angry, but not at you.”

“We aren’t, either.” Stiles quickly added from behind Isaac, sweeping up the mess.

“You’re not mad at me?”

“Unless you sent those flowers to yourself, and considering that your best friend had to slap you out of a panic attack, I’m doubting that theory. This...whoever it was...”

“You’re in the house of the son of the town sheriff and about to go on a date with the deputy, someone’s got the yaytsa to screw with you, and it’s not attractive.” Stiles snapped, but it no longer held the venom it might have when Isaac thought that they were made at him. Along with the absolute feeling of dread, there was something. Was it...joy? He didn’t know that it was possible to be happy while he was coming down off of a panic attack, and worrying about how he was going to take the mess he now found himself in and compact it into a small enough ball to handle.

“Papa, vse govoryat plokhiye slova.”

“Oh...frak, sorry about that. I thought that maybe you hadn’t taught him that

one.” Stiles said, a little sheepishly.

“It’s...alright.” Isaac said, quietly.

“Hey, we’re going to figure this out, okay?” Jordan was trying to be reassuring, but Isaac’s eyes were drawn repeatedly to the note where someone had admitted to watching him, watching his *son*. He needed to talk to Jordan and figure out a way to make him feel safe, again, but more importantly, he needed to ensure that his son wouldn’t be harmed.

“Seryozha, I need to speak to Mr. Parrish.” Isaac began, slowly, he knew that this was going to be tough, for both of them, but also didn’t want Sergei to know exactly what had happened or why it was so bad.

As predicted, Sergei pressed himself closer to the side of Isaac, wrapping his arms around him.

“Ya ne khochu idti.” Sergei said, his voice a little muffled by Isaac’s shirt.

“I know, but this is very important, and I promise not to take too long.” Isaac whispered, kissing the side of his head. “Maybe Dyadya Stiles will get you some dessert before dinner?” He asked, pointedly, and smiling gratefully when Stiles came closer without hesitation.

“Yeah, buddy, let’s get some ice cream so your papa can talk to Jordan.” When Sergei didn’t move, Stiles sighed, and leaned over on the counter. “You know, Sergei, when I was your age, I was really close to my dad, too. He always told me that he would protect me, and really, that’s what your papa’s trying to do here. He’s going to be safe with Jordan, and you’ll be safe with me and Derek.”

“Yavlyayetsya li on govorit pravdu, papa?”

“Stiles wouldn’t lie.” Isaac affirmed.

Before he got up, Sergei gave Isaac one more tight hug, before jumping from the counter with Stiles’ help. Stiles retrieved some ice cream from the fridge, before heading down the hall. Isaac waited until the door to the game room shut, before he broke down.

“Hey, it’s okay.” Jordan whispered, but he still pulled Isaac into a hug, which

Isaac completely melted into. Like a man who had lost all the crutches in his life holding him up, Isaac sobbed into Jordan's uniform. Jordan didn't freak out or try to stop him. On the contrary, he rubbed circles into Isaac's back.

"Isaac, it's...it might be the wrong thing to say, and if I'm creeping you out, please tell me, but...I like you, and I like Sergei, and I'm not going to let someone fuck with the people I like."

There were two sides to the coin, and it was almost surreal how it felt. On the one hand, Isaac apparently had a stalker, someone who was watching him and Sergei, but on the other, Jordan had just admitted to liking him, and had shown a protective streak. The thing was...Isaac trusted Jordan. He believed the man had his best interests at heart, and wouldn't want to see him hurt.

"Do you mean that?" Isaac asked.

"I wouldn't have asked you out otherwise. I...I know it's not my place, but I'm furious about this, and I'm going to do everything in power to find out who it was."

"You don't know me, Jordan. Do you really want to get tied into this with me?" Isaac asked. He was tired of standing on his own, and had been for a long time. He had accepted Stiles' help, and if Jordan was willing, he was going to cling to that like Sergei did to him. If it was bad, he would have to face those consequences later, but handling a stalker on his own...He didn't think that he had the ability to handle that.

"From the moment I saw your eyes, I wanted to get involved with you, and make you happy, and if I have to stop a psycho from harming you to do that, then that's what I have to do. Also...it's kind of my job." He said, fingering his badge.

"That's...a lot." Isaac finally admitted, looking deep into Jordan's eyes. "The last time someone wanted me, it was for a quick fuck, and he ran away when he found out I had a son. And Sergei's mother...That wasn't love, that was a mistake that turned into the greatest gift. I haven't really dated someone since high school."

"Danny Mahealani." Jordan said, nodding. For a moment, Isaac felt his blood chill, he thought that perhaps Jordan *was* the stalker before he looked up and

quickly explained. “Shit, sorry. He mentioned you at Jungle. I’m sorry, that probably sounded...fuck, I’m just not good at this.”

He looked so nervous, and it made Isaac smile. “It’s...look, I’ll be jumpy for a few days, but this is...this isn’t your fault. But, Jordan...Look, I need to know, because the safety of my son will always be my first priority...Was this you?” He asked, reaching for the note and holding it up.

Jordan shook his head, though his eyes never left Isaac’s. Being a father, Isaac was able to detect a lie in his son, and Jordan had none of the signs that he was lying, and beyond that Isaac really *did* trust him, so he nodded. He would trust Jordan. If it paid off, they might have something beautiful. A man who was willing to stand beside him in spite of an apparent stalker on the first date? *That* was Isaac’s definition of a responsible man. If he was wrong...Isaac might just move to some remote part of Russia with Sergei and hide himself away from the world.

“Let me call John in, and we can begin to set up an investigation. He’s not going to let me help as much because I’m involved, and he’s going to call me a suspect since I have a romantic interest in you, but I’m swearing to you right now, Isaac. On my life, I didn’t do this, and I’m going to do everything in my power to find out who did, and make him pay.”

The fierce determination in his voice was sharp and cold. There was none of his usual warmth or kindness there, and Isaac realized that Jordan was a guardian of sorts, and he did not envy the one who had to face his wrath.

Notes for the Chapter:

chto sluchilos = what happened?

Vy krichali, papa. Pochemu ty krichish = You cried, papa. Why did you shout?

Ya tol'ko khotel, chtoby dat' vam obnyat = I just wanted to give you a hug.

yaytsa = balls

Papa, vse govoryat plokhiye slova. = Papa, he's saying bad words

Ya ne khochu idti. = I don't want to go

Yavlyayetsya li on govorit pravdu, papa = Is he telling the truth, papa?

Uh...so, this happened. And I know Sergei isn't reacting to Jordan with the defensiveness that people expected, don't worry, we haven't seen the last of protective Sergei.

21. The Sheriff

Summary for the Chapter:

John arrives to speak with Isaac.

Isaac

Isaac realized that day how much of a father figure he had come to see John as. John stood there, emanating authority and security, and Isaac practically drank it up. He didn't want to seem like any more of a child than he had already seemed in front of Jordan, but something must've shown on his face, because Jordan's lips twitched. John had aged a little, but Isaac only saw it as distinguishing, rather than diminishing, and he still looked like he could kick down a door and drag a man half his age away.

The hair which had once been brunette, held a bit more gray than Isaac remembered, and the wrinkles may have multiplied, but his green eyes were just as he remembered.

If Wesley had been there, he probably would've laughed at Isaac's misfortune, but John's face, while stern, bore with it the warm smile of one who had not seen a friend in a long time.

"Moy plemnyannik." He said, the Russian falling from his lips less gracefully than Isaac would've have spoken, but none of the warmth was lost.

"Dyadya Stillinski." Isaac replied, managing a small smile as he used the same term for John that Sergei did for Stiles and Derek. They could never be truly father and son, and Isaac wouldn't want them to be, anyway. Having a fucked up father taught him how to be a proper one for Sergei, but they still had a bond, and that was enough for Isaac.

"All these years and you're just going to stare at me like that? Does your Uncle John no longer warrant a hug?" John said, stretching his arms out.

"John, his leg." Jordan began, but Isaac shook his head and stood up, receiving only a slight twinge for his effort.

John was warm and smelled of home, as he hugged Isaac, tightly. Isaac had no more tears to shed for that day, but he was still felt the tightness in his throat.

“I’m here on business, but soon, you’re going to get a visit from me, and we’re going to have a long chat about calling family members.” John whispered into Isaac’s ear, not a threat, but adoptive fathers had their stern side, too, and Isaac nodded as he pulled away.

“That being said, I missed ya, kid.”

“I...I missed you, too.”

“And the rumor is that you have a son...as do I.” John said, taking a seat on the couch and looking around.

“Stiles is with Sergei in the other room. I’m...I promise to let the two of you meet, but not until...”

“Let’s get this out of the way then.” John said, nodding, with understanding. “Jordan tells me that you received some flowers and a note.” His tone became businesslike, and Isaac couldn’t stop another grin at the familiarity he felt with John.

Isaac nodded. “Yes. Sergei told me about them, but it was Stiles who brought them inside, we all thought it was...” Isaac paused, but John leaned forward with his elbows on his knees.

“Isaac, you can’t date my deputy without me knowing about it.” He said.

“Right...Okay.” Isaac let out a sigh. “So, whoever it was wrote in Cyrillic, which made me think it was Jordan even more.”

Jordan squirmed uncomfortably, and when Isaac looked at him, he had a look of hurt on his face.

“It’s just...you learned ‘Seryozha’, ‘Dasvidanya’, and asked me how I was, I thought you had just learned another bit of Russian to impress me.” Isaac explained, turning the look on Jordan’s face around.

“You were impressed?” He asked, though John pointedly cleared his throat

before Isaac could answer. “Right. Sorry, boss.”

“So, how did you find out that Jordan didn’t send the flowers?”

“We were...are going to have a date, and he brought me a rose.” Isaac said, looking at the blushing Jordan. “He told me it was the first, and then I...”

“You had a panic attack?” John asked, and Isaac nodded.

“Yeah, Stiles...” He let out a chuckle, “Stiles slapped me out of it.”

“Well, he’s had a few of them growing up, so if that’s what works.” John said shrugging, before clearing his throat, again and adding. “Unless you want to press charges?” John had always been this way with both Stiles and Isaac, sometimes Scott. He’d think like a father first, that is, trusting in Stiles, but he never forgot his duty as an officer of the law.

Isaac shook his head. “It worked, and my first concern is Sergei, I can’t defend him or comfort him if I’m a useless puddle of nerves on the tile.”

“Okay, so where is this note?”

It was Jordan who got up to get it, and despite hardly knowing the man, and not having even gone on a proper date with him, he felt a little vulnerable at his absence.

John took the letter and looked it over, a darkness in his eyes growing a little as he did so.

“So, whoever it is knows you and Sergei, knows that you speak Russian, and knew enough to send the note when you and Jordan were about to have your date.” It wasn’t a question, more of a methodical talking to himself. “Where are the flowers he sent you?”

“In the trash.” Isaac said. “I dropped the vase that had them, and Stiles cleaned them up. They were...green gardenias.”

“Why were the flowers in a vase?” John asked, and Isaac had been in John’s presence long enough to know what he was doing. He probably didn’t doubt Isaac, but he was making sure that Isaac wasn’t lying. He couldn’t do his job if

Isaac was withholding something. And there had been times that Isaac had hid the truth to keep himself or his friends out of trouble, but there was no lie when he spoke.

“Because when they arrived, I didn’t realize that they weren’t from Jordan. I just thought he dropped them off before his shift.”

John nodded. “Alright, here’s what we’re going to do. I’m going to take this to the lab, it’s a long shot, but there might be a fingerprint on it.” He said, waving the letter. “I’ll also check into the local flower shops, see who bought green gardenias...” He paused for a moment, as though the flowers were of particular interest, before he continued. “I know my son-in-law is armed, and that this house has a security system, so you’re probably safe here.”

‘Probably’ wasn’t going to work for Isaac. He needed to *know* that his son wouldn’t be in danger, but before he could even voice his complaints, John held up a hand.

“In the meantime, until we know what the threat level is, I’ll have someone watch the house, though.”

Isaac wasn’t sure how he felt about that. He was grateful, of course, but he could see how it would become a problem for the house to always be under surveillance, and it would mean putting officers out, in the boring heat, watching for a threat that might never arrive.

“I don’t want to have to force Sergei to see this. I don’t even want him to know, but he’s smart, John, he’ll notice if there’s a cop around him twenty-four seven.”

“Unless...” Jordan began.

John sighed. “Unless what?”

“Well, I’m not moving in with him but just because I’m off duty, that doesn’t mean that I don’t know how to recognize threats. When I’m here, with Isaac, we wouldn’t have to send anyone out, and Sergei wouldn’t know that part of the reason I’m here is to look out for him. If...Isaac, if you’re up for that?”

Isaac thought that Jordan had a fair point, and would never admit how much that smile drove him to nod. It wasn’t like it was an irrational choice, but part of the

reason he was accepting it was.

“Jordan, you shouldn’t...if you’re going to be involved with him, it’s unethical for me to allow you to be the one to watch him.”

“Unethical, but smart.” Jordan argued. “You know that, John. You didn’t hire me as the youngest deputy in a hundred mile radius because I make rash decisions. You hired me because I know my shit.”

It was bold, at least in Isaac’s estimation, but John just chuckled as though he truly did respect Jordan’s perspective.

“Alright, soldier, but this s on your shoulders, now. This went down in my son’s house, so anything that happens...it’s your ass, got it?”

Jordan nodded, his eyes focused with determination.

“And you’re still to call another officer when you’re going to leave, alright? My nephew’s on the line, as well.” John finished with a smile that warmed the very core of Isaac’s heart.

“Thank you, dyadya, I...I was freaking out.”

“Well, you need to remember that you’re family here, and *ask* for help once in a while. Don’t think that your little sojourn to the hospital went unheard by me.”

Isaac felt as though that ghost would never stop haunting him, but he still blushed in shame, and ducked his head.

“Now, I’m eager to meet your son, Isaac, and speak to mine, but I need a moment alone with my deputy first.”

Parrish

Parrish was not a coward, nor was he unable to defend the things he cared about. Four years in the military had taught him one thing: no fear. That had been his rock, his sole comfort throughout years of a life spent getting shot at in the desert. If he took his fear and placed it in a tiny ball within his gut, he could face

down anything. Later, when he had been diffusing bombs for the LAPD, the same rules had applied. No fear. Even when he accepted the position as deputy in his hometown, where nary a crime was committed, he still kept the same rule.

It had worked, too, when Jordan was worried about his own life, and his own safety in the face of danger to fight for something he believed in. Agreeing to date Isaac awoke a terrifying new world, though. He had someone else to worry about, *two* other people, in fact, and his own stalwart character was not enough to cover the man with the gorgeous green eyes or his son.

And that, more than anything was what told Jordan that he had come to truly care for Isaac and Sergei, because Jordan was *scared* for them, and still not running. He wanted to find who had threatened the safety of the object of his affections, and make them sorry they ever decided to lay their eyes on him.

“Life is so fucking painful, sometimes.” Was John’s opening statement to him, once Isaac had gone to the game room.

“Uh...yes, sir?” Jordan said, unsure of what his superior meant.

John stared at him for a moment, before shaking his head. “He’s back in town for less than a week, and he’s already caught your eye and the eye of a stalker. When he was little...Look, Jordan, understand now that that boy has gone through more than his fair share of pain, and, it’s tough to sit here and be the ‘sheriff’ instead of the man I was when he was little.”

“You two have history.” It wasn’t a question, it didn’t need to be. He didn’t need to understand Russian to hear the affection John and Isaac had exchanged, and the word ‘nephew’ had certainly been thrown out there. John and Isaac had some kind of bond.

“I was there for him when his real father wasn’t. And...” John reached up and fingered the shining badge on his chest for a moment, before unclipping it and placing it in his back pocket, a symbolic gesture. “And I want to rip the throat out of anyone who dared to fuck with Isaac. I’ve watched him struggle and grow into an exceptional young man, and I’m not going to stand for this.”

“I understand how you feel, sir.” Jordan said, nodding.

“With all due respect, Jordan, no, you don’t. I watched him bruise, kept him safe

and fed when his father didn't give two shits whether or not he died. I got the frantic calls from my son telling me that Isaac had dropped off the map."

Jordan couldn't boast the same things, and in all honesty, he was glad of that fact. He didn't know who or where Isaac's real father was, but whoever he was should've felt lucky that Parrish couldn't find him.

"That's...but...How could someone hurt him?" He finally asked, while John raised an eyebrow.

"You've been in this line of work, you've been a soldier, and you know that sometimes people are fucked up."

"But he's...he's so innocent." Jordan whispered, angry with himself for some reason that he had not been there to defend Isaac when he was younger, even more for not having shielded Isaac from whoever had decided to fuck with him now.

"This isn't a fairytale, kid, innocence is what these sickos thrive on, which is why people like you and me exist. If you really like him, you'll look after him."

"I swear, John, I won't let anything happen to him." Jordan vowed, and he wouldn't, because he simply cared too much about Isaac to see any harm come to him.

Notes for the Chapter:

Moy plemyannik = My Nephew

Of all the protective characters I've ever written, Jordan is my favorite, but John is a close second.

22. Bulbasaur Shirt.

Summary for the Chapter:

With John and Jordan around, Isaac can slip into a sense of normalcy.

Isaac

John was a natural father, no one could deny that, and there wasn't really a physical sign of this, but Sergei seemed to trust him implicitly. Isaac was far from upset about this, though, the more people that Sergei trusted, the better that Isaac felt, sloughing off small amounts of his worry bit by bit. Another person that Sergei trusted was another person he could turn to in the horrifying event that Isaac couldn't be there for him.

"Hello, Sergei, my name is John, I've known your dad for a long time." John said, holding out his hand.

Sergei took it. "Papa talks about you sometimes, and said that he likes you. Don't hurt my papa, though." His warnings were becoming more than common place, but John's response was as solid as everyone else's.

"I'm here to protect him and ensure that he's there for you for a long time."

"Okay." And just like that, it seemed, Sergei trusted John. "Mozhete li vy govorit' po-russki?"

"Nemnogo. My wife taught me, and your father taught me a little too while he was teaching Stiles."

"Only because you were worried about me and Isaac planning nefarious things in second languages."

"And lo and behold, when you were ten, you guys set fire to a portable toilet." John argued with a chuckle.

Isaac smiled at the easier days. Besides, they really hadn't set it on fire, just singed some toilet paper.

“That was mostly Scott, who still hardly speaks any Russian, so blame English.”

John gave his son a bemused look, the business side of his visit finished, he was allowed to let his hair down, a little. Isaac had no doubt that the man would ensure his safety, though.

“Ah, if only one could blame a language for all their child’s choices, eh, Isaac?”

Isaac was a little shocked at being addressed, but realized in that moment that he was the only other father there. It was a moment that made him feel aged, even though he was hardly the oldest person in the room. Maybe Jordan was younger, but Stiles wasn’t, and he knew for sure that Derek wasn’t.

“Uh...Sergei’s very well behaved. Stiles and I were...different.” He finally said. Sergei preened at the praise, and Stiles mocked an indignant face.

“We were behaved, we were just bad influences on one another, and I blame MTV.”

“Have you been letting him watch King of the Hill?” Isaac asked Derek, recalling the main character’s oft repeated blame of his son’s behavior on the channel. Isaac was perfectly happy to lose himself in light banter for a moment.

“Let him? Have you tried to hide...anything from Stiles? I had to have John take care of all the preparations when I proposed to him, because Stiles knew something was up, and was tearing the place apart.” Derek said with a chuckle.

Stiles polished his fingernails on his shirt with a pleased smirk. Like Isaac, he seemed to have shoved the worry and fear down to somewhere where he could still function, but Isaac was far from forgetting the anger in his eyes as he had cleaned up the glass, and Isaac was sure that it hadn’t been because he was having to sweep up a mess. Isaac fully intended to question him, but he couldn’t bring himself to send Sergei away for another moment. It had been hard enough when he was speaking to John.

“Papa, I’m hungry.” Sergei whispered the next moment, tugging on Isaac’s shirt.

Isaac let out a chuckle, in spite of everything, even his acceptance of Jordan’s protection and continued affections, he had forgotten about the food. His promise to take his son to the park didn’t feel possible, though. He didn’t fear

that he would become agoraphobic, but for one day, he wanted to be close to the house, with its gun and other people who could help him protect Sergei.

He knelt down to Sergei's level, and chose Russian in case what he was about to request turned into an argument. Sergei was a good child, but he had been known to stick to his guns.

“Seryozha, ya ne dumayu, chto my mozhem poyti v park segodnya.”

“Iz-za tsvetov?” Sergei asked, looking a little put down, and that brought forth more anger than even the note or the flowers themselves. That because of this sickos actions, his son had to be disappointed. It was a cut to his soul, and he vowed to make it up to Sergei soon.

“Da. No , my poydem v blizhaysheye vremya, ya obeshchayu.”

Both John and Stiles were looking at him as though they too hated that plans had to change because of the threat that had crept up on them from the shadows, while Jordan and Derek were pleasantly curious about what was being said.

Sergei looked down at his shoes for a moment, before he nodded.

“Khorosho, papa. Mozhem li my po-prezhnemu idti v zoopark odin den', tozhe?”

Isaac reached out and pulled his son to his chest, fighting back the pathetic tears of a failed father, and nodded.

“I promise, Sergei. I'm just looking out for your safety.”

“Budet Mister Parrish po-prezhnemu yest' u nas?” Jordan looked up at his name, and Isaac allowed him to make the choice, again. He kept expecting to look up and see the man running for the hills, and every time that he was still there, made Isaac's gut explode in butterflies. That Sergei had been the one to ask, was certainly encouraging.

“It's up to Jordan if he wants to stay and eat with us.”

Jordan's face broke into that now familiar, but no less comforting grin.

“Yeah, of course!” He said, a little too enthusiastically, though Isaac figured it

was probably because they had been having a conversation in a second language.

“Sorry about the Russian.” He whispered as he returned to standing up. “It’s just...it’s easier to break hard news in the language that comforts him.”

Jordan shrugged. “I’m just disappointed that I don’t have a special name in Russian.”

“Oh, you’ll pick one up in time, but your name isn’t Slavic, so it’s not as easy. Not to mention, Sergei wasn’t raised in Russia, and neither was I, so our use of diminutives is...less than it could be.”

Jordan nodded. “That reminds me, though. While I may not have learned any of the alphabet, I *did* have another Russian phrase I learned.”

Isaac longed for the distraction, and so he nodded for the man to continue.

Jordan cleared his throat, a tinge of red on his cheeks as everyone was looking on him.

“Vy...Vy dolzhny krasivyy glaza.”

Again, it was more that Jordan had put in the effort than the simple compliment, and he smiled to show his gratitude.

“Why thank you, deputy.”

Jordan looked pleased with himself, and Isaac couldn’t help but not feel afraid with the handsome man smiling at him.

“So, I said that right?”

Isaac nodded. “Yeah. Think of Spanish, though, and trill your r.”

“Krasivyy.” Jordan tried again, beaming when Isaac nodded encouragingly.

“Derek nikogda ne izuchal russkiy yazyk dlya menya, on dolzhen ochen' nravitsya vam.” Stiles said, and Isaac realized that Stiles was right. It was just a language, but Isaac was allowed to see it as so much more because Jordan was *still* there. Willing to date a man who was being stalked was either crazy or a

sign of deep devotion.

“How do I relate to any of this?” Derek asked, and Isaac chuckled.

“I was just saying that you must be hungry.” Stiles lied, but Derek caught on right away.

“Uh-huh, does ‘russkiy’ mean food?”

“He’s good.” John said with a chuckle. “In any case, I need to head back, but Isaac, I’ll be looking into what we discussed, and Parrish, when you leave-.”

“Call someone in, got it, boss.” Parrish said with a nod.

John seemed a little hesitant to leave, but Isaac trusted Jordan to keep Sergei safe, and beyond that, John had given him his number in case of an emergency, and therefore waved John goodbye with a smile.

“Oh, and Stiles, your jeep. It’d be such a shame if my son had to walk to work.” John reminded softly, before shutting the door behind him.

“Yeda!” Sergei demanded.

“Alright, alright, let’s get settled and we can have a nice meal, and Isaac...” Stiles began, moving closer so that he could whisper in his ear. “If it takes everything I have, I promise that you’ll be able to take Sergei out, soon. I’m not letting some asshole frak with my brother.”

Isaac nodded, grateful for everyone’s determination to keep him and Sergei from the new danger that reared its head. That combined with the prospect of learning how to shoot from Derek was reassuring enough that as he doled out food, he felt better than he had since he knew the truth about the note.

“Ah, man, I might marry you just to get more of this food.” Jordan said through a mouthful of bread.

“Well, it has always been my dream to be a kept housewife from the Fifties.”

Isaac was only teasing, but Jordan seemed to take it very seriously.

“I swear, I didn’t mean it like that, Isaac. I would never, *never*-.”

“Dude, take a chill pill, I was joking. I’m glad that you like my food.”

Jordan’s grin returned, and the cuteness was only accentuated by the string of cheese that was stretched across his jaw. Acting on impulse, Isaac reached out and plucked it from the stubble on his beard. The moment their skin touched, Isaac felt a warmth run through him like a momentary fever, and Jordan blushed.

“There was...cheese.” Isaac explained, his face matching Jordan’s while Stiles, Derek, and Sergei watched them, the former two with barely concealed grins.

“Thank you.” And it really wasn’t fair that Jordan had a perfectly tuned husky voice, either. It sent shivers through Isaac, and for the barest moment, he could believe he was alone with Jordan, and a pleasurable chill ran through his spine. “You make a napkin unnecessary, and I mean that in the best possible way.”

“I’ve been upgraded from eye candy to napkin.” Isaac said, but with a big grin so that Jordan knew that he wasn’t being serious.

“Papa, Chto eye candy v vidu?” Sergei asked, making Jordan chuckle, and pulling Isaac from his spell.

“It’s uh...It means that...” Isaac wasn’t sure how to explain. “It means that Jordan thinks I’m handsome.”

“I sure do.” Jordan confirmed, and Sergei, with his young mind just nodded.

“That’s because you are handsome, papa.” He didn’t understand the difference, but Isaac wasn’t ready for him to be enlightened on that fact.

Stiles was giving Isaac a pointed look that was about as subtle as an elephant in the kitchen, but Jordan only had eyes for Isaac. Still, Isaac was able to decipher his best friend’s staring.

He likes you!

But Isaac didn’t need Stiles to tell him that. He also didn’t need the waggling eyebrows to confirm that he, in turn, liked Jordan. Isaac truly wanted to be alone with the man, as their date had meant to be, but was unsure of how to tell Stiles

and Derek that he wanted them to leave *their* kitchen.

“So, tell me more about you. Deaton mentioned that we went to school together, but I don’t remember you.”

Jordan nodded. “I remember you, I was on the swim team.”

Isaac shook his head surprised that someone could have escaped detection from him in high school. And it wasn’t just his attractiveness, either, it was the simple fact the Beacon Hills was hardly even a mediocre school, Isaac thought he knew everyone, even if the swim team was out of his normal clique.

“I’m sorry, but it’s not clicking.”

Jordan closed his eyes, like he was remembering. “You used to wear that shirt with Bulbasaur on it.” He smiled, and Isaac knew that he had worn a ratty gray shirt with a picture of Bulbasaur on it.

“You remember that about me?”

Jordan nodded. “I’m not going to get romantic and sappy and tell you that I remember everything about you, but I remember that shirt.”

Isaac chuckled. “I only wore it so much because my father...he didn’t spend a lot of money on clothes.” It was a dark moment, but one that Isaac was willing to gloss over, it seemed that Stiles and Jordan had not forgotten, though. Their faces darkened, and even Derek looked a little angry, and to keep the truth hidden from Sergei, Isaac changed the subject.

“What about after school? There’s definitely no chance of you having seen me after that.”

Jordan shook his head, the lightness returning to his demeanor as he spoke. “Nah, I signed up with the marines when I graduated. Spent the minimum time there, before deciding that I wasn’t amicable with this country’s policies, and so I went to L.A. to work for their bomb squad, I spent a few years there, and then came home when the position of deputy opened up.”

It was a simple explanation, but there was a lot in there, like the surprise that Isaac was technically dating a marine, and a veteran of the bomb squad. To say

that he was impressed would be an understatement.

“That’s kind of...wow.” Isaac said with a chuckle, feeling the same uncomfortable feeling of not having achieved anything, as he did when he found out about Stiles’ and Derek working, but he didn’t bring it up. Despite the recent shadow that had come up to fill him with fear, Isaac had a job to look forward to, so it didn’t feel as grating.

“It’s not...My reasons for doing it were less than noble.” Jordan said with a smirk. “My parents died when I was seventeen, and the last thing that my father told me before he passed, was that his biggest regret was raising a gay son, so I set out to prove him wrong. To show that a gay man could do anything that a straight man could do. Coming home to be deputy happened because I realized that I didn’t have to prove anything to a dead homophobe.”

The story was short, but it was anything but sweet. There was a chill in Jordan’s voice, a tone that told Isaac that the man hadn’t gotten along with his father any better than Isaac had gotten along with his. Isaac didn’t blame Jordan, either. After all, he hadn’t grieved his own father’s death.

Notes for the Chapter:

Mozhete li vy govorit' po-russki? = Can you speak Russian?

Nemnogo = A little.

ya ne dumayu, chto my mozhem poyti v park segodnya = I don't think that we can go to the park today.

Iz-za tsvetov = Because of the flowers?

Da. No , my poydem v blizhaysheye vremya, ya obeshchayu = Yes, but we will go soon, I promise.

Khorosho, papa. Mozhem li my po-prezhnemu idti v zoopark odin den', tozhe = It's alright, papa. Can we still go to the zoo one day?

Vy dolzhny krasivyy glaza = You have beautiful eyes.

Derek nikogda ne izuchal russkiy yazyk dlya menya, on dolzhen ochen' nravitsya vam = Derek never studied Russian for me, he must really like you.

Yeda!= Food!

Papa, Chto eye candy v vidu? = Dad, what does 'eye candy' mean?

So, a lot of Russian, but you love me anyway, right? Next chapter soon, and thank you everyone who's keeping up with this.

Also, I know parents out there will be all: 'I would never be this calm!', but I'm trying to make Isaac artificially calm to keep Sergei calm.

23. Explosive Death

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac learns that Jordan can be a good father figure.

Isaac

It took Jordan a moment longer than usual to return to his normal happy state, and Isaac didn't blame him. They both had scars, deep ones, and Isaac found himself wondering if Jordan could be a better father for it, the way that Isaac had tried to be. Instead of using his past as an excuse to behave as he wished, he used it as a model of how not to behave towards his own son, and Isaac was curious if Jordan thought along the same lines.

He basked in those thoughts for a moment, before shaking himself out of them. All things considered, it might have been a successful date, and Jordan might have been kind, but Isaac *couldn't* rush the relationship in his head any more than he would have in person. He had to tread carefully or risk losing the best thing that had happened to him since Sergei was born. Still...it was something to think about, since Jordan didn't seem bitter about his life.

Isaac wasn't surprised, but was no less pleased when Stiles stood up, pointedly bringing Derek to his feet as well. "We're going to...go and catch up on Veep, there was a new episode last night." He said, giving Isaac a wink. "Ad Isaac, if you do the dishes, I'll send you packing to Antarctica." Stiles warned, and for once, Isaac wasn't going to argue. He might feel like doing the dishes when he could concentrate, again, but Jordan was giving him a sly smile, and Isaac was lost in it.

"So...What would you two say to a movie?" Jordan asked and Sergei's eyes lit up.

"Dyadya Stiles has so many movies that I've never seen." He said. "There's one with a robot that fights bad guys."

"Big Hero Six?" Jordan asked, and Sergei nodded, enthusiastically. "It's an awesome movie, let's go put it on."

Just like that. No question about making a choice on his own, Jordan just accepted Sergei's first option with an easy smile. It was remarkable.

"You know, considering that you knew exactly what movie he's talking about, I'm guessing you've seen it, you could pick another one, if you like." Isaac whispered.

"And ruin that smile?" Jordan asked with one of his own. "Nah, it's a good movie, I'm sure that he'll love it."

Jordan took Sergei to the room to show him how to work a Blu-Ray player while Isaac made some lemonade for them, unable to keep a grin off his face. It faltered a little, but only out of nervousness when he returned to the room to find the couch occupied on either side by Jordan and Sergei there was nowhere for him sit, but in the middle. And that meant contact...with Jordan.

Isaac placed the drinks on the table, and exhaled before he sat down. Sergei wasted no time in scooting closer to him, but most of Isaac's attention was focused on Jordan, who was so close, but felt so far away. Isaac could smell his cologne, it was something deep and musky, still strong, though Isaac had to assume he could have only put it on that morning. If he had stopped home, surely he would have changed. Jordan also radiated heat, his warmth was inviting, but Isaac didn't know if they were at some unspoken cuddle stage or not.

In his anxiety, Isaac kept cracking his knuckles, sometimes, he'd leave his hand hovering in the air, almost praying for Jordan to take the initiative.

While his hormones were commanding parts of his body not awakened in a long time, Isaac also paid attention to the movie, realizing how dark some films had gotten since he was young. The explosive death of one of characters actually shocked him, and he found himself unconsciously pulling Sergei closer. He didn't understand how the surviving character could still be breathing after such an event. Isaac would certainly just...drop dead, if he lost Sergei.

Still, the robot was kind of adorable, if not the smartest character on screen, and Isaac was laughing at something it had said when it happened.

Jordan was slick. Isaac could credit him with several points for ingenuity. Under the pretense of leaning forward to get his lemonade, Jordan placed a hand on

Isaac's thigh for leverage, the contact sending a rush of gooey feelings through Isaac. When he returned to his original position, though, Jordan's hand remained where it was, and when Isaac chanced a glance, he saw Jordan blushing, but grinning like some diabolical genius.

And he really kind of was.

With Jordan having taken the first step, Isaac felt a little less worried, when he slowly reached his hand out and placed it on top of Jordan's, his fingers wiggling for just a moment to catch the softness there.

They had done it. They had touched, and just like the kiss, Isaac found himself longing for more, and simultaneously being content at the same time. He felt his toes curl at the small accomplishment, but apparently, it wasn't enough for Jordan, because in the next moment, in a sudden movement, he placed his head on Isaac's shoulder.

Isaac was willing to chalk it up to Jordan being tired, but two things stopped that theory dead in its tracks: For one thing, they *were* technically on a date, and though Isaac had little experience in it, he supposed that affectionate people actually made physical contact during such affairs. For another, when his eyes looked down, he saw Jordan looking at him, wide awake, and grinning as wide as he ever had.

Sergei didn't notice, though. Not that Isaac was trying to be sneaky, but Sergei was completely absorbed in the film, jumping and laughing at the moments that called for it. He didn't seem to like when Baymax turned evil for a few minutes, holding onto Isaac's arm even tighter, but that part was quickly over.

"Papa, are there really robots like that?"

"No, son, this is all make believe." Isaac whispered back.

"Good, I don't like bad robots." Sergei said.

"I promise, I will never let anything happen to you, Seryozha. I'll always protect you, even from evil robots." It was much deeper than a simple promise to protect his son from a fictional robot, Jordan seemed to realize this because his hand tightened in a silent display of solidarity with Isaac.

“I know you will, papa, you’ve never let bad things happen to me.”

It wasn’t exactly the truth, but Isaac knew that Sergei saw him as far more capable than he had been, and Isaac wasn’t willing to fight that perception, anymore. Besides realizing that if Sergei was happy, he *must* have done something right, but he couldn’t face this new challenge, if he was unsure of himself.

Watching the movie helped Isaac to realize something about Jordan. He put himself completely in the moment with Isaac. He knew that many people liked to text or tweet even when they were on dates, but Jordan’s hand never strayed from his thigh, and never seemed bored, which was a huge plus for Isaac. Jordan made him feel like he was important, and though Isaac hadn’t felt the cold end of a relationship before, he knew that he vastly preferred what he was in.

At the end of the movie, Sergei bounced up from the couch, and carefully removed the disc, before placing it in its box, and taking it back to the shelf.

“You up for another one, Seryozha?”

Sergei looked outside, where the inky blackness was pressing against the window, and turned to Isaac.

“Papa, can I watch one more before I go to bed?”

Isaac pulled out his phone and checked the time, it was later than he realized. With the note, John’s interview, and then dinner, plus the movie, it was already eight thirty, and even though Sergei wasn’t in school, Isaac liked to keep him on a regular sleep schedule.

“How about a compromise?”

Sergei looked skeptical. “What compromise?”

“Well, you can stay up for one more hour and play video games, and then watch whatever you want tomorrow.” Isaac offered, not making it a question.

“Okay, but will Mr. Parrish be here to watch with us? He told me about a lot of movies.”

Isaac could bet that Jordan had never experienced a man's son asking him for the second date, but decided to go with it.

"Yeah, Mr. Parrish, will you be here to watch with us?" He asked, smirking down at the deputy who was still leaning against his shoulder.

"I wouldn't miss it for all the world." He said as though he found it odd that his presence was even in question.

Sergei didn't return to the couch, choosing instead to sit on the floor in front of the T.V. After offering both Jordan and Isaac a chance to play with him, which they both declined, Sergei settled in with Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword. Which left Isaac and Jordan alone on the couch.

"You've really raised a good son, Isaac." Jordan said, quietly.

"Thanks, I still think that there's a few things I could have done better."

"Hey, you and I had...darker childhoods, and I don't see a trace of that in how you raised him. You made him happy, made him strong, and that's pretty damn impressive."

Isaac blushed. "You're..." He hesitated, unsure if the words he wanted to say would ruin their budding relationship or not.

"Go ahead." Jordan said with an encouraging smile.

"I see a lot of myself in you, which sounds weirder than I mean, I just mean-."

"We both had terrible pasts, and we do what we can to be different than the generation before us. I got you." Jordan said nodding. "Was that something you were worried about?"

"No." Isaac said, sincerely. "Maybe if I had heard what happened, earlier, but...I got to know you first, and I can see that you'd never harm Sergei that way."

"Of course I wouldn't."

It was only a verbal confirmation of what Isaac's instincts already told him, but it was warming nonetheless.

“I should thank you, by the way.” Isaac said.

“For what?”

“For agreeing to look after us. I don’t think that I would’ve been able to stay calm with just a car outside.”

“I don’t think *I* would have been able to just go home and be fine knowing that you were here with that sicko out there.”

Isaac squirmed. “We’ll have to face it at some point. This night will end and you’ll have to go home to sleep.” Isaac could tell that that night would not bring with it easy rest.

Jordan sighed and nodded, before he sat up, and Isaac felt himself instantly missing his warmth. Jordan didn’t go far, though, he just turned himself so they were face to face.

“Isaac...I promise not to let anything happen to you or your son. Even if you decide this won’t work out,” he gestured between them, “I’m not going to let anyone hurt you two.”

But it was working out, and Isaac was just as grateful of that as he was with sitting next to a man who had a gun strapped to his belt.

“I hope that...I hope that it doesn’t come to that. I’d like it if...” Isaac sighed and took a chance with telling the truth, even if it meant that he scared Jordan away. “I’d like it if our relationship didn’t get downgraded to ‘professional’.”

“I think we’re doing well, so far. I...” He let out a chuckle. “I was so nervous about putting my hand on you, I thought you might...think it was us going too fast.”

Isaac shook his head and laughed. “No, I liked it, and you know what?”

Jordan cocked his head in curiosity.

Another leap of faith. “What if we throw social convention out of the window?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well...I mean, I don’t want to spend all our time wondering if something is in line with some cosmic clock that we’re all supposed to know, you know? If something feels good we should do it, and if the other person doesn’t like it, we can speak up and say so.”

For a moment, Jordan sat there, presumably thinking it over, while Isaac’s heart thudded painfully, and he worried that he had spoken too much, too soon, but after a moment, Jordan smiled.

“I’m glad you said that, because I’ve been dying to figure out how I was going to do this.” He leaned forward and their lips met in what felt like a shower of static electricity. Isaac managed to keep a sane portion of his brain long enough to make sure Sergei was still transfixed on his game, before the torrential onslaught of pleasure overwhelmed him and his brain submerged in it for a few moments.

Soft, warm, and so full, Jordan’s lips didn’t part for them to kiss more intimately, and Isaac really didn’t care, what he was receiving was so fulfilling.

When Jordan pulled back, Isaac was actually drawn in his direction to prolong the kiss for a moment, before allowing them to part.

The room was silent for a moment, except for the sound of Sergei’s game, and Isaac let out a chuckle at the fact that his son was so absorbed in his game that he hadn’t even noticed such a pivotal moment.

“Sorry.” Jordan whispered, looking wounded, and Isaac felt the heavens shatter, feeling as though he had made a mistake. Maybe he wasn’t the best kisser, but how bad did he have to be for Jordan to apologize?

“Um...was I that terrible?” Isaac asked, feeling hurt.

“What? No, that was...something else, but...Wait, why did you laugh?”

“Because Sergei’s sitting there, not realizing that his father just had the best kiss of his life. I...you thought that I was laughing at you?”

Jordan nodded, his face burning red, and to prevent another mishap, Isaac fought back another laugh, but it was a close thing. Jordan was insecure, and it was a little adorable.

Okay, it was *really* adorable, and it caused Isaac to pull him in for another kiss, which Jordan was only too happy to join in on.

“Seryozha, vremya lozhit'sya spat'.” Isaac said a little while later, it hurt him to say it because he didn’t want the day to end, but Isaac had no more control over time than he did over space.

“Papa, do I have to?” Sergei asked, but around a yawn that made Jordan laugh.

“Sergei...” Isaac began, again, and he nodded with a defeated sigh, displaying his obedience, something that Isaac was ever grateful for.

“Wait here.” Jordan said, getting up, confusing Isaac.

“Where are you going?”

Jordan whispered. “I told you that I’m not going to let anyone hurt you two, I made a promise. I’m going to go and check his room.”

Isaac was touched, but even more than that, he was relieved. The muscular man with the gun was going to sweep his son’s room, and there was a fucking tangible relief that settled in his chest.

“Papa, where is Mr. Parrish going?”

It was another moment where Isaac would have to lie for the greater good of protecting his son, and that made him hate the stalker even more. He hated lying to Sergei except in the most grave of circumstances, but he also knew that if he told the truth about the gravity of the note, the flowers, and why Jordan was no in his room, that Sergei would never feel safe again. Isaac had already ripped him from one home, and if this second home was unsafe, he didn’t see how Sergei would find stability in his life. And so, it was with a grimace when Isaac responded:

“He’s just going to get something for me.”

A look crossed Sergei’s face like he knew that Isaac wasn’t being honest, but he didn’t speak to it.

They only had to wait a moment before Jordan returned, nodding.

“Why don’t you have anything?” Sergei asked, and Isaac sighed. At Jordan’s confused face, Sergei continued, “Papa said that you were bringing him something, but you don’t have anything.”

“You’re papa misheard me, what I was actually doing was leaving a surprise for you in your bed.” Jordan said, without missing a beat, and Isaac nearly laughed in surprise.

Jordan was good.

“Come on, papa! A surprise!” Sergei cried, tugging at Isaac’s arm and leading him to his room. Isaac gave Jordan a grateful look, before noticing the package of Skittles left on his son’s pillow. He might have liked it if his son didn’t eat a bag full of candy right before bed, but he sure preferred it to his son knowing the darker secrets of what had really been happening.

Sergei crawled into bed with his candy, while Isaac sat on the edge, and Jordan leaned against the doorway.

“Good night, Seryozha.”

“Spokoynoy nochi, papa, I love you.”

“I love you, too. I love you more than anything else in the whole world.” Isaac whispered, ruffling his son’s hair, before placing a kiss on his forehead.

Notes for the Chapter:

Seryozha, vremya lozhit'sya spat' = time to go to bed.

I decided that with another day of kidney stone pain, that writing was out, so I posted this so that I don't feel too guilty.

You guys are great, thank you.

24. A Cold Shower Probably Would Have Been Better

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan offers to stay the night, and Isaac really isn't in a position to turn that down.

Isaac

Isaac lingered for a moment longer than was necessary, but felt the simmering fear in his heart that something terrible would happen. He'd never forgive himself if Sergei was hurt or worse because some sicko decided that he liked to watch Isaac.

"He'll be okay, the house has security, I'm here, and there's two guns within close reach." Jordan whispered when Isaac got up.

"It's, it's a father's worry-." Isaac began, but Jordan shook his head.

"I know that I can't fully understand the way that you feel, and I'm not telling you not to worry, because I might as well ask the sun to stop shining. All I'm telling you is that he *will* be safe. I'll die before I allow something to happen to him."

Isaac smiled. "Thank you. I don't even want to imagine what I would've done if you hadn't been here."

"Based on my observation of you so far, I'd imagine that you probably would've coped. You're kind, Isaac, and sweet, and a great father, but I can see the fight in you, and I have no doubt that you would take that bastard down with you, if you had to."

Isaac wasn't so sure about that, considering that his first action when he had found out had been to crumple to the ground and panic, but that Jordan saw something in him was flattering, even if it was less than true.

They crossed the hall to Isaac's room, and Isaac felt himself shudder as he realized that they were alone for the first time.

“Were you thinking of going to bed?” Jordan asked.

Isaac shrugged. “I’m still trying to shake my old sleep schedule, but I could stay up...unless you wanted to head home?” He made it a question to show that, in reality, he didn’t want Jordan to go home.

“If you give me the power over my coming and going, I might not ever leave.” Jordan whispered, stepping closer.

“And would it scare you if I said that, in this moment, I wouldn’t mind that?”

Jordan shook his head. “What would scare me is going home tonight and leaving you here, without knowing for sure that you’ll be safe.”

“I don’t...I don’t want you to suffer for me, though. You’ve been up all day, you have to be tired.”

Jordan quirked a smile at him, his eyes trailing over Isaac’s shoulder. “Would you look at that?”

Isaac turned, but saw nothing behind him besides-.

“You have a bed.” Jordan said, and Isaac chuckled. What would it feel like to have Jordan pressed against him? Isaac surmised that it would be a fair bit better than trying to find sleep with the sounds of the night making him think of a stalker.

“You’d be willing to stay the night with me?” Isaac asked.

“Only if you’d be willing to have me stay the night with you.” Jordan replied, and Isaac nodded, because he really didn’t have within him the strength to say no. Why fuck around or play games? Unless Jordan took on a sudden change in character, he was, in essence, the perfect man, and Isaac wasn’t going to miss out on the chance to be with him.

“Do you think that I could take a shower, first? Long day...man smells.” Jordan said, motioning to Isaac’s bathroom. Again, Isaac nodded.

“I could probably use one when you’re done. Towels are in the cabinet, and I can find you something to wear.” He said, and turned to his bed, and sitting down.

Jordan hesitated for a moment, before heading into the bathroom. The sounds of a shower starting could only bring to Isaac's mind the fact that he had a naked Jordan in within ten feet, and the mere thought was enough to bring to life Isaac's cock, something that had happened rarely in the years since he had last had sex.

It wasn't hard to picture those taught muscles, wet and naked in a cloud of steam, hands running over-.

Isaac shut his brain down on that train of thought. Whether or not Jordan was staying the night, Isaac knew that he wasn't ready to have sex with him. His offer to get rid of social convention had been more so that they weren't burdened, but that didn't mean that he didn't have any barriers in place.

Isaac was just pulling some clothes from his dresser when he heard the soft vibrations of a phone ringing. He hadn't even seen Jordan take it out of his pocket, but there was no doubting that it was his. Isaac didn't feel comfortable answering someone else's phone, but he did check the screen, letting out a chuckle. He could only assume that "Big Bad Boss" could only be John, and it was with that smile that he retrieved his own phone and dialed the sheriff.

"Isaac, is everything alright?" John sounded a little panicked, which, in turn, made Isaac feel less than secure. His heart thudded in his chest, while he held the phone closer.

"Is something wrong?" He asked, his voice a tight whisper.

"What? No, I just got a little spooked when Jordan didn't answer his phone."

"Oh." Isaac let out a shaky breath of relief, wishing that John had led with that. "Jordan's in the shower." Isaac said, without thinking.

The line was silent for a moment, before Isaac heard John suck his teeth, a sure sign of his irritation. Isaac almost felt worse than he had when he thought John was calling in some emergency.

"And why is the deputy taking a shower? What did you two do?"

Isaac blanched, an anger filling his chest. "Nothing! What do you think I am? We ate, watched a movie, and sent Sergei to bed. He's taking a shower because

he's had a long day, and he wants to stay the night."

"Chert Poberi, Isaac." John sighed. "And for the record, I don't think you're anything bad, it's just...look, you like him, and he likes you, and I leave him alone for a few hours, and then you tell me he's in the shower, what was I supposed to think?"

"That I've been hurt and don't just spread my legs for anyone, dyadya." Isaac said, feeling genuinely wounded that John had jumped to conclusions.

"Isaac...look, I'm sorry." John said. "But, I was against him staying with you in the first place because he's involved with you, and now he's staying the night?"

"He's staying the night because we'd both feel better. Someone said that they were watching me, John. Someone was watching my fucking son." He said, his voice shaking in anger. "So, you'll forgive me if I'm doing something that makes me feel better. If you don't like it, you can bite me."

"Isaac, enough!" John shouted, and for a moment, the child in Isaac took over, and he felt himself calm a little, enough that he could breath and rationalize things. Perhaps John hadn't meant to be so blunt, and maybe Isaac had overreacted, but if Jordan was willing to stay, he wasn't going to let John tell him that he couldn't.

"Who is it?" Jordan's voice made Isaac jump, and then blush. He stood, dripping wet, only a towel wrapped around his waist. His body was actually less muscled than Isaac would have guessed, but it was hairy, and cut, and Isaac could find no complaints. "I heard you yelling, so I came out." He explained, but Isaac barely heard it. Despite his fear and anger, Isaac was still human, and the most primal part of him wanted Jordan in the worst way with his body displayed before him.

"Uh...it's...John." Isaac said, holding out the phone, not even caring that Jordan was wet when he took it.

"John?"

Isaac could hear the heated tones coming from John's end of the phone.

"Because I'm not an idiot, John, I was going to call Greenburg in to look after the house while I was asleep." Jordan responded with far more respect than Isaac

had.

John's response seemed calmer in response.

"I think he did, but I promise to double-check." He said, before his eyes raked over Isaac. "What did you say to Isaac, sir?"

John said something, and Jordan narrowed his eyes.

"Sir with all due respect, speak about him like that again, and I'll quit. I've thought of nothing but the safety of him and Sergei since I got here, and-." He paused for a moment, while John spoke. "Yeah...Well, tell *him* that, not me." Jordan nodded and held out the phone.

Isaac took it, smiling a little at how defensive Jordan had been.

"Hello?" He said, expecting another rant, but receiving a sigh, instead.

"Isaac, I'm sorry for implying anything bad, but...look, I just want you to be safe, that note scared the hell out of me, and I didn't want your hormones compromising your safety."

"But that's not what's happening. Like I said, it makes us both feel better knowing that he's here."

"Well, I'm sorry, Isaac. I shouldn't have said those things to you, I just...worry."

"I know, dyadya, and I'm sorry for snapping back, but...he's looking out for me. I trust him."

Jordan's face broke out into a wide smile.

"I'm sending a patrol car, anyway, just to be on the safe side, and Jordan is going to make sure that the alarm system is activated."

"I think Stiles turned it on, but thank you."

"Isaac, I really am sorry...I just-."

"Want to look out for me, I get that. Good night, dyadya."

“Spokoynoy nochi, moy plemyanik.”

“You trust me?” Jordan asked the moment Isaac put the phone down.

“I wouldn’t have ensured my son’s care to your hands if I didn’t.” Isaac replied, honestly.

“I’m going to go and make sure the alarm is on, and then come back, but Isaac, thank you.” Jordan said, pecking his cheek, igniting Isaac’s face.

When Isaac stepped into the shower, he was still as hard as a diamond, and even the act of taking his boxers off made him shudder in pleasure. He hoped he was silent as he stepped in under the hot water and began to rub himself.

Isaac leaned against the cold tile as he imagined that it was Jordan pressing him against it. Those hands would softly caress him, nipping his neck, the teeth would elicit little moans, and Isaac knew that he would beg for more, and even alone, he quietly did.

“Fuck, Jordan, just like that.” He whispered, his free hand reaching up to grasp at his nipple, a little trick that Danny had shown him, but he wasn’t thinking about Danny, he wasn’t even thinking of his own hand, he was picturing that it was Jordan’s mouth, and it felt so good.

Isaac breaths were coming in short little pants as he ran his hand over his member, holding onto the image of Jordan kissing him, and feeling an orgasm building within him.

Isaac brought himself to completion, quickly, worried that if he spent too long in the shower, Jordan would know what he was doing. With a grunt and a muffled whimper, he shot his seed out across the porcelain tub, falling to his knees as the pleasure took over his mind. He felt his mind shatter and dissolve into a muddle of delicious muck and reformed around an image of Jordan’s smile, allowing Isaac to think a little more clearly.

“Fuck.” He hissed as he knelt under the spray of the water, letting his body’s tingles finish. Still panting, Isaac pulled himself to his feet, and continued his shower in a more orthodox manner. Isaac didn’t masturbate that often, with Sergei frequently going to his bed, and the fact that he felt wobbly seemed to be evidence of that.

In a daze, Isaac washed up and shut off the water, before drying off, hoping that Jordan hadn't heard what had transpired. If he didn't his face didn't betray him as he was reclined on the bed in a pair of Isaac's dress pants, his chest bared to the world. Isaac's eyes flashed over the hair that covered his entire body, surprised, but turned off by the sheer amount of it.

Jordan Parrish was an otter, and it was pretty sexy.

"I hope you don't mind, but I didn't want to just be lying here naked."

"I wouldn't have minded." Isaac said before he could stop his stupid mouth.

Jordan raised an eyebrow. "Well, that's certainly something to keep in mind, but what do you say we wait?"

Isaac nodded, fully willing to wait, but Jordan continued.

"It's just...I like you, Isaac, and trust me...sex too early can ruin things, and I really, *really* don't want to ruin this." And there was another explosion of butterflies in his stomach. Jordan wanted a relationship!

"It's...you don't have to explain Jordan, I'm not ready, either." Because Isaac really wasn't. No matter how hot Jordan looked with his muscles popping under his skin, no matter how obvious the bulge in the soft cotton in his pants was, Isaac couldn't give that part of himself to Jordan, yet.

"That being said, I would like to hold you, if that's alright?" Jordan asked, looking like a puppy begging for a scrap of bacon, and even if Isaac had been planning on it, he wasn't able to say no.

"Give me...just a second?" Isaac replied, moving to his dresser to get another pair of sleep pants for himself.

"Of course...babe." The word was spoken with a nervousness that Isaac rarely saw in Jordan, as though he feared Isaac kicking him out for using it. On the contrary, though, Isaac nearly melted at the word. To Danny he had been 'Isaac' to Natasha 'papochka', so to receive a term of endearment from Jordan made Isaac literally stop what he was doing to soak in the warm feelings spreading through him.

“Was that bad?” Jordan whispered, and as Isaac slipped his pants on, and threw off his towel, he shook his head.

“No. No one’s ever called me anything like that, before. It’s...” Isaac didn’t finish his sentence, but turned with a smile.

“So, I can call you babe?”

“Yes...vydrachka.” Isaac whispered, choosing the word on the spot. Isaac thought it fit, considering that Jordan was playful, hairy, and lithe.

“I knew you’d give me one, but what does it mean?”

“Little otter.”

Jordan laughed and scooted over so Isaac could get into the bed after him.

“What? I don’t get something fierce and protective like ‘little lion’ or ‘little tiger’?”

Isaac shook his head. “I don’t only view you as a protector. If I did, you’d have to call me ‘guarded’ or ‘charge’ or something like that.” Isaac climbed into the bed, the warmth of Jordan’s previous position wrapping around him like a cocoon. He stayed on the far side, though, not wanting to crowd Jordan. “I like you for you, Jordan, the fact that you’ve agreed to protect my son is...something that I’ll never thank you enough for.

“I see your point.” Jordan said. “‘Little otter’ I am, then.”

They had kissed, and Isaac had already shammed himself by giving into his hormones in the bathroom, and yet, the few inches of space between them seemed like a mile. He was unsure if he could summon the courage to reach out across the distance, and touch Jordan.

“Is the alarm on?” Isaac asked.

“Yeah. Stiles said to tell you that the code is four-seven-four-two.”

Isaac let out a laugh and at Jordan’s confused face, he explained. “Forty-seven is forty-two adjusted for inflation. It’s a Star Trek reference. He’s such a nerd.”

“Isn’t that the pot calling the kettle black...in front of the cast iron frying pan?”

Isaac nodded. “I suppose, but I don’t mean it with malice. We all teased each other growing up, I mean...Scott, Stiles and me. Derek wasn’t part of our group.”

“If I’m remembering correctly, Derek wasn’t part of any group when he showed up.”

“He scared the shit out of me, there were all those rumors going around him, and he just...brooded in every class he was in.”

“Yeah. I still haven’t even asked him what happened. I’m sure you know.” Isaac said, offhandedly, he really didn’t expect Jordan to share information with him.

“I do, but...”

“It’s alright, vydrachka.” Isaac said, the second use of his word feeling more natural. “I’m not pumping you for information.”

Jordan snorted, and Isaac blushed, realizing that his wording might have been less than ideal.

“So mean.” Isaac huffed turning his back, presenting the perfect target so that once again, Jordan could take the lead in the physical contact of their relationship.

Isaac didn’t feel like Jordan held him, it was more like sliding into a warm bath. When their torsos touched, Isaac expected a scratch from his body hair, but it was so *soft*. Isaac let out the lightest of moans as Jordan held.

“Sorry, is this...too much?” Jordan asked, moving as though he was going to pull back, but Isaac shook his head, and held him close.

“No, it’s nice. I haven’t been held in a long time.”

“Since...what was her name? Natasha?”

“That is the name of Sergei’s mother, yes, but no, she never held me. We weren’t...I guess if we’re going to be in a relationship, I should tell you the

truth.” Isaac said, even though he wasn’t sure if he really wanted to. The fact that he had had a child out of wedlock was one thing, but the fact that Isaac never even held true affection for her was something he viewed as a stain on himself.

“Honesty is always good.” Jordan agreed, sounding curious.

“Natasha and I weren’t in love, we never were. She was...me exploring my sexuality, and she got pregnant because I was stupid, and didn’t wear a condom.”

Instead of laughing or admonishing him, Jordan’s hand rubbed his chest reassuringly.

“Was that supposed to scare me away?” He asked with a chuckle.

“That wasn’t my intention, but I wouldn’t have been surprised if you had.” Isaac explained, the all too familiar feeling of relief washing through him.

“So, what you’re telling me is that I’m currently holding a human being and not a robot? You went out and got a woman pregnant because you made a mistake, that’s called being human. Sergei came of that mistake, and honestly, you’re so good at raising him, making him happy, so I can’t see how that one mistake can be a bad thing.”

Isaac felt as though his past was his greatest weakness and his greatest strength, barring his son, but Jordan was there, looking at his blunders, and accepting them.

“Where is she now, may I ask?”

“Dead.” Isaac said, feeling guilty that he *didn’t* feel guiltier over the demise of Sergei’s mother. “Died in childbirth, and we’ve been alone ever since. I think...” Isaac let out a chuckle, having not reflected on the events in a long time. “I think that she somehow knew.”

“What do you mean, babe?”

“Would you believe that this isn’t my first stalker?” He said with a laugh, though he felt very cold after the words came out. What was happening now was still too soon and painful for him to joke about.

“Natasha wanted to know that I’d be there for Sergei. ‘This is your only responsibility, Eto tvoy yedinstvennyy otvetstvennost’, she told me all the time. I ended up living a domestic life because she followed me so much.”

“Did she think that you would run?”

Isaac nodded. “She thought that I was going to leave. She knew that I preferred men, and she didn’t see me as being responsible enough. I think...she knew that she wouldn’t survive childbirth.” Isaac explained without knowing how Natasha would ever know that. “She wanted to know that her child would be safe.”

It was a dark thought. Isaac had despised the way she had treated him, but if any part of her nagging had resulted in him being a better father, how could he fault her for that?

“Well, she was kind of successful, wasn’t she? I can’t think of a single moment when you’ve let your guard down since you arrived, Isaac. You’re a great father, babe.”

“Thank you. I don’t always feel like it, but...I look at him and I see an amazing child. I’m so proud of him, and...I had to have done something right.” And it felt *good* to actually admit that he did something right. It wasn’t like he was under some obligation to think of himself as a terrible father, he had certainly done better than his own.

“Why do you sound so unsure of yourself?” Jordan asked, his voice ghosting over Isaac’s ear in a way that made him want to shudder from the tickling feeling, and glue their bodies in that position so he could feel it more.

“Because he had *nothing*, Jordan. He had literally three shirts to wear, had to eat ramen noodles most of his life, and he took so much shit from those heartless, little bastards at his school for it, and when I was there, when I was in Chicago, it was impossible for me to look at our lives and see myself as having done anything remotely good since I picked him up in the hospital.” Isaac said, his voice turning cold at the harsh realities he was admitting.

Jordan didn’t answer right away, they layed there in the dark for a moment before his voice finally spoke, a forced evenness to it:

“A few years ago, when I was working for the bomb squad in L.A., I got an

emergency call one night. They wanted me because I had a reputation for being calm in the face of horrifying acts.” And *that* was telling to Isaac, because Jordan may not have had an outburst, but he had been so *angry* when he had seen the note and realized its implications, but Isaac didn’t speak, instead he listened to the man’s story.

“I got to the address, and...the first thing I remember was wondering who had brought their daughter to the crime scene, it seemed so inappropriate. I later found out that she was only five.”

The past tense drew a gasp from Isaac, but Jordan quickly assuaged him. “She’s alive, sorry about that. She survives, that’s not the point of...I’m sorry.”

Isaac nodded, and laid back down.

“Anyway, she wore a nightdress with Ariel from The Little Mermaid on it, and I didn’t even realize what was truly wrong until my CO told me to check under it. I did, and found ten pounds of C4 strapped to her chest. I...I had to remain calm and laugh with this innocent little girl while I cut a bomb off of her body.” His voice didn’t sound so calm, anymore, and it wasn’t fear, it was anger, and Isaac understood. He couldn’t even begin to process the thought of someone attaching a bomb to his son. The moment the images surfaced in his mind, he burned them away to prevent himself from fleeing into Sergei’s room, and possibly barricading the two of them away.

“Bomb squad only handles the disarming, but I kept my nose right in the middle of that fucking case until it was solved. It was...The scum that dared to call himself her father had done it. He was sending her to a man that he owed money to, for drugs, and he was going to sacrifice her to remove the threat to his own worthless life.”

There was more than just bare veins of anger in his voice, and Isaac felt them matched. He hadn’t lived the experience, but he was just as angry at the thought of some heartless monster doing such a thing to the person who looked to them for their sole protection in the world.

“That’s sick.” Isaac said, thickly, glaring at his wall. “That’s really fucking sick.”

“There was never a happier day in my life up to that point than seeing him dragged into cuffs for what he did. So, when I hear that you fed and clothed your

son, when I heard from Stiles that you let yourself get sick and starve so that you could ensure that he had a full belly, and when I hear you tell me that he went to school, I don't think 'Wow, he could only afford so little', I think to myself that you did what a proper parent is supposed to do. It's a fucked up world, Isaac, and you did the best you could with the hand that you were dealt."

Notes for the Chapter:

Chert Poberi = God Dammit!

Spokoynoy nochi, moy plemmyannik = Good night, my nephew.

Sorry for Jordan's dark story.

Long chapter because when I wrote it, I didn't want it to end.

Tell me if you like it, I'm going to go heal from my stones.

Thank you.

25. He Can't Sing, But That Doesn't Matter

Summary for the Chapter:

A morning after a wonderful night.

Isaac

Isaac wasn't sure when he fell asleep. The last thing he remembered was the warmth and comfort that Jordan offered. Not only with his body, but his words, which had placed a new perspective on his parenting in a way that he just... hadn't seen with Stiles' praise. Isaac was sure that nothing had happened besides Jordan snuggling him, and felt a little bad for that. He had been looking forward to kissing the man, again.

He certainly *was* aware when he woke up, though, because it was due to the lack of that warmth behind him, and for a moment, he wanted to be a kid, and throw a fit that his happiness had been taken away from him. He sat up and looked around for any sign of Jordan, and finding it with the steam escaping from underneath the bathroom door, and a soft voice singing.

As Isaac approached the door, his bare feet making no sound on the floor, he discovered that while Jordan was certainly attractive, and his heart was in the right place...

He really couldn't sing.

The version of the Duck Tales theme that he was horribly off key, but Isaac smiled. He really found it endearing and just a little adorable that his...boyfriend was singing in the shower.

Isaac pulled on a shirt before going into Sergei's room, not really surprised when he didn't find him there, but a small tremor of panic worked its way through his chest, anyway. It did not quell until he found his son sitting with Stiles and Derek in the kitchen.

"Dobroye utro!" Stiles said, looking up from a stack of papers he was poring over. "You're up early."

“I...” He paused and gave Stiles a significant look, though Sergei was much too smart to be fooled.

“Did Mr. Parrish stay the night?” He asked, and Isaac didn’t know how he could lie, without being found out for his deceit the moment Jordan came out from his shower.

“He did.”

The words had a markedly different effect on Sergei than on Stiles and Derek. His son merely smiled and returned to attacking his cereal, but both men gave him licentious smiles, and Isaac glared them into submission. Even if something R rated had happened the night before, he certainly wouldn’t want Sergei to become party to that knowledge. It was by luck alone that Sergei couldn’t see the deeper meaning of what it meant when an adult had a ‘friend’ stay over.

“Sorry, babe, I was...not...saying anything because the entire house is awake.” Jordan said, jogging in from the hallway, and blushing when he saw the assembled group, though Isaac secretly thanked God that he had at least gotten dressed.

“Good morning, Mr. Deputy.” Stiles said with the biggest shit eating grin Isaac had ever seen, and pouring them both a cup of coffee. “I trust you slept well?”

Jordan’s cheeks turned a deeper red, but Isaac felt as though his face was on fire. He was unsure of why it was so embarrassing. So they had slept together, and only in the literal sense, it wasn’t that big of a deal.

“Stiles, Vy mozhete osvetlit?” Isaac asked, desperately, and Stiles gave a coughing laugh before he nodded.

“Yes...Sorry about that, it’s just...I swear it’s coming from the best possible place. We’re just excited.”

“What are you so excited for, dyadya? Are we doing something fun?”

“Yeah, we were...” And here, Isaac had nothing but respect for Stiles, considering how fast the lie poured from his mouth. “We were playing a trick on Jordan. We’re going to the zoo this weekend, and I was teasing that he couldn’t come.”

“Mr. Stiles, that’s not nice! Why can’t Mr. Parrish come with us?” Sergei’s face was set in anger, and Stiles actually looked hurt that he had all of a sudden stopped being ‘dyadya’, and that earned a chuckle from Isaac at the small touch of revenge.

“He can, I promise he can, I was just being a tupitsa.”

Jordan and Derek were silent through the little exchange. Derek, it seemed was merely amused at the exchange, but Jordan still looked a little shell shocked at having been caught.

“Vydrachka, are you alright?” Isaac asked. Jordan’s eyes slid over the room, before he moved closer to Isaac, and whispered.

“It’s alright?”

“Well, the sky didn’t fall around us and space-time wasn’t torn asunder, so I’d say...yeah.” Isaac kept his voice equally low.

“I swear, babe, I was going to sneak out before he saw me.” Jordan began, but Isaac shook his head.

“We aren’t sneaking around or doing anything bad. It’ll dawn on him when it does, and I’m not going to hide it in the meantime. This feels...right, Jordan, and I don’t want to taint that by making it seem like it’s something bad.”

“That’s...” Isaac didn’t expect the impact that it would have. Jordan’s voice cracked, and his smile was almost blinding. “I’m probably making a big deal out of this, but *thank you*.”

Isaac knew there was a story there, something that Jordan had yet to share, but he was willing to let that come when it came. Things were going good, and he didn’t need to know absolutely everything about Jordan, right then.

“I’ve got to head to work, but we should set out a schedule.” Jordan said, his voice returning to a normal volume.

“A schedule?” Isaac questioned. “Like a date schedule or...?”

“Yeah. I don’t want to be up in your business every day, but I’d like...I’d like to

see you again.”

Isaac really, *really* didn’t have the strength or will to say no to that. Not only because he felt safer with the officer in his home, but because he had yet to find a complaint about his presence. Everything about him was so calm and collected, the way he smile made Isaac’s heart flutter, and he was just...handsome and kind and the way Sergei trusted him was just perfect in a way that Isaac didn’t know that he and been missing or even that he needed.

“I’d like to see you again, too.” Isaac said, once again feeling like some crushing teenager as he blushed and looked through his eyelashes.

“So why doesn’t Mr. Parrish come over tonight? I’d like to see him, too, and we could play Smash Brothers together.”

Isaac laughed at that. Dating would be a lot harder if Sergei wasn’t on board, and he was just all too willing to spend time with a man who, like Stiles and Isaac, was a nerd, and could get into things like ‘Smash Brothers’ and other such activities. Isaac thanked God for his son every day, but was a little more grateful that he didn’t have to struggle for the chance to spend time with Jordan.

“If Stiles and Derek-.”

“Oh my God, yes! Absolutely, stay all the time. In fact, you could probably just move-.”

“Stiles!” Isaac snapped. “Rambling. Too much.” He was scared, because he was having fun, and felt safe, but didn’t know if he was ready to commit to that level, yet, and Stiles’ big mouth might just ruin everything for him.

“So...moving at a more reasonable pace, what would you and Sergei say to pizza?”

“I think we could find ourselves in a position to say yes.” Isaac said with a smile.

“Good.” Jordan said, nodding. “I’ll...I’ll call you when my shift is over, and... maybe even a little after, I’m going to have to wear something else.” He said, sniffing the armpit of his uniform.

“Sounds good.” Isaac said.

“Walk me to the door?” Jordan asked, seemingly relived when Sergei chose to stay with his cereal.

“Is something wrong?” Isaac asked, opening the door, before jumping, and rushing to turn off the alarm.

“No. I just got to spend my first night holding you, burning it in my memory, babe, I just...I want you to be safe, okay? We’re going to have a patrol car out here, but if you go somewhere, let them know, and please, *please* call me if there’s anything that makes you uncomfortable. I don’t care if the T.V. gets too loud or if Sergei goes to the bathroom, and you panic for a second. Just... please?” He asked, and Isaac nodded, before seizing an impulse, and kissing him on the lips.

“I promise, vydrachka.”

“Alright, babe. I’ll see you tonight, okay?”

Isaac nodded, again, and Jordan moved towards the door before pausing, and turning around for another kiss, surprising Isaac, but in the best possible way.

“Something to remember me by.” Jordan said with a wink. “Lock the door and set the alarm, okay?”

Isaac nodded in a pleasant daze, letting out a happy sigh when he shut the door. He did as requested and both locked the door and set the alarm, before practically floating back to the kitchen, a stupid grin still on his face.

“Good news, babe, turns out we won’t need to buy any maple syrup any time soon.” Stiles said, and when the entire room turned to him with confused faces, he elaborated: “Because Isaac is a big sap...get it?” His grin was ridiculous, as his joke had been, but Isaac was in such a good mood that he laughed.

“See? Isaac gets me.” Stiles said, moving closer to him. “And he was the butt of the joke.”

Sergei chuckled at the word ‘butt’, and it was a relief equal to the happiness Jordan had given him. Stiles had just made fun of him, in a lighthearted way, but Sergei hadn’t responded with anger or protectiveness, and that was the best gift he could receive. A Sergei who could get along with the adults in Isaac’s life.

“Babe...the thing.” Derek said, elbowing Stiles, though he had to reach a little, and Stiles rolled his eyes.

“So tell him.”

“Isaac, Stiles and I took the day off.” Derek said, and Isaac nodded.

“Uh...that’s cool I guess.” Isaac was confused as to why that was so important.

“Well...we were thinking that maybe Sergei could hang out with Stiles for a bit.” Derek said. “Then you and I could...” He turned to Stiles who sighed, and eyed Sergei before saying very quickly:

“Diapazon...pulemet.”

Isaac understood the words, and understood why Stiles had used an odd version for the word ‘gun’ instead of ‘pistolet’. He assumed it was so that Sergei wouldn’t know what was being said, and he thanked God when Sergei pulled on a confused look.

“Papa, what do those words mean?”

“I’ll tell you when you’re older, Seryozha.” Isaac promised, hoping that he would never have to. He dreaded Sergei knowing that he had ever even considered using a gun. He would not divulge that until Sergei was at least sixteen. Sergei would never need to know that they had a stalker after them, it would shatter his whole sense of security.

“But, papa...!” Sergei whined, and Isaac turned a stern eye to him.

“None of that. Grownups have words that children shouldn’t know, it’s life.”

“Eto ne chestno.” Sergei pouted, and Stiles smiled at him

“To make up for that, why don’t we go anywhere you want, today, huh? Shchenki i kotyata?”

Sergei’s eyes lit up exactly as Isaac expected them to. “Do you mean it, dyadya?”

“I wouldn’t tell you anything if I didn’t mean it, kiddo.” Stiles said with a grin.

“Papa, can I go see the puppies and kitties with Stiles?” Sergei asked, turning to Isaac, and even if Isaac had planned on something else, he would have found it impossible to ignore the look of pleading in Sergei’s eyes. He looked like a damned puppy himself.

“Of course you can.” Isaac said, quickly, and Sergei bounded from his chair, giving Isaac a hug around the waist, before running into his room, presumably to get dressed.

“Thank you. I mean...”

“Don’t mention it.” Stiles said, dropping his voice. “After yesterday...we wanted to get this done, and I knew that there was no chance in hell that you’d bring him, so...it’s all good.”

Stiles might have been taking a cavalier attitude with his kindness, but Isaac was marking it down in his head as another act of benevolence that he wouldn’t forget.

“Yeah, but-.”

“Dude, I’m going to be a hero to the kids at school, they love free days...and I also just turned fifty years older because I called my students ‘kids’.” He said with a heavy sigh.

“Older but wiser, dude.” Isaac said, encouragingly.

If Isaac thought that it would be easy to let Sergei go with someone else, even if that person Stiles Stillinski, he was sorely mistaken. He held his son tight to his chest, and imparted warning words.

“Stay with Stiles. I don’t care if it’s to the bathroom or...just stay by his side, okay?”

Sergei nodded, looking a little confused by Isaac’s fierceness. “Of course, papa, I promise.”

Isaac stood up and turned to Stiles, who spoke before Isaac could.

“With my life, man, with everything that I have, I will not let any harm come to your son. Kak budto on byl moim sobstvennym synom.”

Isaac nodded, but still felt the need to go the last bit. “I’ll...Stiles, I will end this world if anything happens.”

Stiles nodded. “That’s...rational.” He said with a chuckle. And it really, *really* wasn’t, but Isaac didn’t care, it was the truth. There could be no world if Sergei wasn’t a part of it. His world as he knew it would end, and he wasn’t prepared to even pretend like he would be able to handle such an event.

“Wait here, I’ll be right back.” Isaac said to Sergei, as he stepped outside, and headed straight for the brown car parked outside of the house. Inside, he found kindly looking black woman who was smiling at him. She rolled down her window, and leaned over.

“Hi.” Isaac began, holding his hand out. “I’m-.”

“Isaac Lahey, of course. I know who you are, Mr. Lahey. I’m Tara, Tara Graeme.” She said, giving him a wide smile and shaking his hand.

“Nice to meet you, and...thank you for this.” Isaac said, sincerely, grateful to the woman who was looking over him and his son without even knowing who he was.

“It’s my job, Mr. Lahey. This is a nice town, and I’m not going to let some degenerate ruin that.” Her voice took on a sharp quality that Isaac found surprising from such a slight woman. He doubted that she would even come up to his chest if she was standing up, but there was a fire he sensed in her.

“So, we’re heading out. I’m not looking for vigilante justice or anything, but... I’m going to learn how to defend myself, at the gun range.” Here, Isaac paused, in case Tara wanted to raise any objections, but she merely nodded, and Isaac smiled a little at living in a small town. Such a statement would have certainly gotten a few raised eyebrows in Chicago.

“The thing is, I don’t want Sergei around that. When he’s older, if he wants to exercise his second amendment rights, I’ll talk to him about it then, but for now, I kind of would prefer if he was away from all that.”

Again, Tara nodded.

“So, Stiles is going to take him around town, show him some things, and I wanted to ask you if you would let John...er Sherriff Stillinski know?” He knew that John would relay the message to Jordan. It would be more professional that way, and the last thing he needed was for Jordan to get in trouble.

“Of course...” She began, sounding as if she wanted to bring up a point, but Isaac continued.

“I also wondered if you would follow Stiles and Sergei instead of me and Derek. We’ll have a gun, and be...in a place full of them, they won’t.”

“Mr. Lahey, I can’t do that.” She said, sounding grim, but firm, and shaking her head.

“Of course you can, it’s just...a small thing. You’re supposed to protect us, which is really protecting him, if you think about it. I’ll be safe with Derek, but I-.”

“Mr. Lahey.” Tara said, speaking over him, holding up a hand. “I was told to follow you and follow you is what I’m going to do.”

Notes for the Chapter:

Dobroye utro = Good morning

Vy mozhete osvetlit = Can you lighten up?

Tupitsa = jerk

Diapazon...pulemet = Gun range, though I'm told the word for gun is an archaic one so Sergei wouldn't know.

Eto ne chestno = It's not fair

Shchenki i kotyata = Puppies and kitties

I know Taa is so rude, but I actually experienced this myself a few years ago. People bring protected by the police are not their bosses so they can't just make decisions on their own.

I sing weird songs in the shower and the day I wrote this chapter one of them was in fact the Duck Tales theme song. I'll leave it to your imagination as to whether or not I was any good.

Thank you. :)

26. Does he always speak like that?

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac learns to defend himself.

Isaac

Isaac let out an irritated grunt. Not usually choosing anger as an emotion so quickly, but he found it completely unfair that she was being unreasonable. He stepped back from the car and shook his head.

“Fine, give me a minute, would you?” He snapped, turning on his heel and heading back towards the house.

Fuck professionalism and fuck boundaries. He wouldn’t let his son go out unprotected, and that was that. He still felt that it would be important to learn how to use the weapon in the house. Stiles was right, the day before had changed things.

“Is everything alright, papa?” Sergei asked when Isaac slammed the door. Immediately, Isaac transformed himself, smiling at his son.

“Of course, Seryozha, I just have to step into the room and make a quick call, okay?” He ruffled Sergei’s hair, playfully, and Sergei chuckled.

“Babe, is something wrong?” The defensiveness in Jordan’s voice the moment that he picked up was comforting, even if nothing bad had actually happened. Even the sound of his voice was enough to calm Isaac down a little.

“It’s alright, vydrachka, it’s just...I’m sorry, maybe I shouldn’t have called.” The end of his little temper tantrum brought with it a sense of guilt.

“Nonsense, tell me what’s wrong, even if it was just that you wanted to hear my voice.”

“It’s only been a few hours, that wouldn’t be...needy?” Isaac asked, getting lost

in the conversation.

“Not if I missed your voice, too.” Jordan said, the smile obvious in his voice.

It was sweet and kind, everything that Isaac had come to expect from Jordan.

“Well, it’s big of you to admit.”

“I’m a big guy...and that came out wrong.” He added quickly when Isaac snickered. “So what’s up, babe?”

Isaac explained what had happened, quickly, and when he was done, Jordan let out a sigh.

“Babe, I get why you’re upset, but that really is her job. Unless she gets orders from us, she’s not supposed to leave you.”

“So give her the orders, vydrachka, please. I can’t...I’m not letting him go out there, alone.”

“That’s understandable, but Isaac, he threatened you. I’m...I won’t be comfortable knowing you’re out there, alone.”

Isaac was touched by Jordan’s worry, but-

“I won’t be alone, Derek will be with me.”

Jordan sighed. “I...Isaac, is the fact that Stiles will be with Sergei enough to assuage your fears?”

“No.” Isaac said, right away, because as much as he trusted and loved Stiles, he wanted more protection for his son.

“Then can you see why, even with a gun, I don’t want you to be alone with just Derek?”

The fact that Jordan cared about him wasn’t surprising, but Isaac grinned, anyway. The fact that his boyfriend was willing to express that worry was something that made Isaac forget all of his anger for a moment. Jordan cared about Isaac, and Isaac knew he cared about Sergei, too.

“I can, but my son...” Isaac began, and Jordan’s voice was soothing as it interrupted.

“Will be looked after, babe. When I hang up with you, I’m going to tell Tara to follow him and Stiles, and then I’m going to send someone else for you. I just wish it could be me, Sergei wouldn’t view me as...suspicious.”

Jordan was worried about Isaac’s relatively small fears about finding out what was going on, and that was touching and comforting all at the same time, and Isaac felt himself wish the man was there so he could give him a kiss of gratitude. That Jordan took these things into consideration was of immense relief to Isaac, who still questioned himself on some of his parenting decisions.

“Unless something happens, he won’t notice her. He’s still blissfully unaware of the greater...problems that I should probably be freaking out about.” Isaac admitted. He was scared, terrified, even, but Jordan was like a shield, keeping his worse panic from coming back, and it all came down to trust. He trust Jordan to look after him and his son. All things considered, he trusted Jordan with his life.

“Don’t freak out, babe. I won’t let anything happen to you. Go learn how to shoot, and don’t forget the alarm.”

“I won’t, vydrachka. Thank you.” Isaac whispered, hanging up the phone, not having the courage to say it, but wishing that the deputy was there.

“Papa! Shchenki i kotyata!” Sergei shouted from the hallways, and Isaac slipped his phone into his pocket, before going out to greet his son.

“Everything alright?” Stiles asked, looking slightly worried, but Isaac nodded.

“Just working out something. Why don’t you two head out, and we’ll leave in a few moments?” He didn’t want Derek to retrieve the gun with his son in the room.

Though he had done the same thing only moments before, Isaac gripped Sergei tight, before making sure that he was buckled, and waving them off, watching Tara wait a minute, before following, while giving a wave to Isaac. Isaac fully intended to apologize to her soon, but did not regret ensuring his son would have the escort.

“What happened?” Derek asked, and Isaac sighed.

“This is just...messy.” He said, before launching into the story.

#

Isaac was proud of himself. He only jumped and let out an unmanly squawk once when they arrived at the shooting range, and Derek had been most gentlemanly about it, only raising his eyebrows.

“Well...I didn’t expect it to be so loud from outside.” Isaac explained with blush, while they headed inside. Derek held a case which contained the firearm, having explained that even police officers weren’t allowed to enter the building with a gun concealed or loaded. Isaac found himself wondering if the officer following them would enter, and if so, if he would be able to keep it once he got inside. While they had been driving, he found himself checking the rearview, mirror, but hadn’t seen anyone following them, and he didn’t want to admit that it made him a little nervous.

He stuck close to Derek as they entered, looking up only when the man sitting at the front desk spoke in a bored voice.

“Welcome to Chuck’s Range. In order to facilitate your needs and the safety of our patrons, you are required under federal law to check all weapons here. Any weapon found on your person that is loaded or concealed will be considered a violation of this law, and you *will* be arrested and charged. That’s fifteen years in a penitentiary.”

The kindest words that Isaac could think of to describe the man would be large, with a great personality. Easily four hundred pounds, the man’s chair creaked as he swiveled in it to face them. A long, silver beard obscured the lower half of his face, and one of his eyes was cloudy forcing Isaac to question how good he could be at his job.

“Keep your pants on, Frank.” Derek snapped, slamming the case down on the counter. “It’s not like we live in the ghetto.”

Frank held up his hands. “Gots ta treat everyone equal, Derek, you know that. ‘Sides, I don’t know ya friend, there.” Frank said, motioning with his jaw towards Isaac.

“Uh...I’m Isaac Lahey.” Isaac said, holding out his hand. Frank reached out, but it wasn’t to shake it, he merely grabbed the case and opened it. Isaac sighed, and put his hand down. “Nice to meet you, too.” He muttered under his breath.

Frank spent a few moments checking the gun, before he reached under his desk, and dropping a clipboard onto the desk, making Isaac jump, again.

“Sign these. Standard waiver, if you get hurt, we take no responsibility.” Frank said, shoving the clipboard at him. Isaac took it and began to fill it out, feeling a little put off by Frank, but still eager to learn. Besides, it wasn’t Frank who’d be teaching him, and in fact, Isaac could probably live a long a fruitful life if he never met the man, again.

Isaac amazed himself with how easy it was to fire a gun. Such much controversy, so much pain, and death, all of human history changed upon its discovery, and it was really just a small hunk of metal that fired other smaller bits of metal. Derek had to lead him to the proper handling by touch, he had said that because of the way Isaac had reacted when they first arrived that it would probably be better for him to fire with a set of earplugs and earmuffs.

Derek’s hands were gentle, but firm as they lined up Isaac’s aim and grip, before he patted him lightly on the shoulder.

Squeeze, don’t pull. Derek reminded him, the oft-repeated phrase had been told to him, yet again by Derek, and that’s exactly what he did. Squeezed the trigger, until his hand jerked and a loud bang echoed, even though his ear protection.

The first shot was jarring, but Isaac regained his senses, quick enough as a surge of adrenaline coursed through his veins.

“Derek, I fired a gun!” He said, excitedly, feeling a little foolish but turning around, after carefully placing the gun down on the stand.

Derek smiled, encouragingly, but spun him back around, and Isaac focused. Picking the gun back up, he emptied the clip towards the target

For Sergei. For my friends. For daring to look at my son. For daring to look at me. Fuck. You. You. Fucking. Creep.

Each shot was easier, and though Isaac despised the fact that he might be forced

to use it one day, he basked in the feeling of safety, and hated it at the same time. The gun made him feel powerful, like he could stand up to a stalker, but so weak, because he couldn't protect his son without it. It was a paradox that he didn't like as much, and he swore the moment the man who was following them was dealt with, he'd never touch one, again.

It was safety, but at a cost he didn't think he was fully prepared to pay, not ever. It would only be through these dire straits that he would take the burden.

Derek tapped his ear, and Isaac set the gun down, again, before removing the protection. Derek's eyes were sharp, and he nodded as he recalled the target.

"You did good, kept your grip steady, and your focus...I'd give you an eight out of ten."

Isaac's face fell. "Why'd I lose two points?"

"You blinked when you shot, it makes it harder to hit the target in subsequent firings." Derek explained calmly, but with a small smirk on his face. "Don't be down, the first time I shot, I'd say I was a three, and Stiles...Stiles isn't allowed around the guns anymore."

Isaac chuckled a little, glad for the jovial attitude. If he sat and brooded too long on what was happening, what all of it meant, why he was in the dank, gunpowder smelling room, he would break down, and freeze. Life had to go on, *he* had to go on for Sergei.

Everything was for Sergei.

#

After checking the gun at the front desk, Isaac and Derek headed out of the shooting range, with Isaac giving Frank a friendly wave, which he didn't even look up to acknowledge. He was feeling good with himself. It had taken two hours and a large number of bullets, but Isaac had finally stopped blinking every time the gun was fired, he even managed to get eight percent of his bullets to hit the head or the heart. Derek had told him that aiming to wound was standard, but when Isaac gave him the look that said why he was even considering a gun in the

first place, he conceded that a threat to Stiles would be met by deadly force as well.

“You did great, man, I’m...I don’t want to sound like a father or anything, but I’m proud of you.”

“Thanks.” Isaac said, grinning, and neglecting to mention that his own father had never been proud of him. Isaac could have become King of England and Wesley would have lamented that Isaac hadn’t taken all of Europe.

As they were leaving, Isaac caught a glimpse of the man who had been sent to tail them. It turned out that he had stayed in the car the entire time, but he gave a friendly wave as Isaac and Derek passed, which Isaac returned. Like Tara, he seemed to be focused on his duty, not reading magazine or slacking off, he was sitting at attention, with his eyes gazing the horizon.

“Listen, Derek...Thank you for this. I mean...Here’s you, this man who hardly knows me at all, and your husband makes a decision to invite me and my son in, and you accept all of that with grace, but to do this for me, give me the means to protect my son...It’s all just...thank you.”

Derek smiled, wider than he normally did. “Sergei calls me and Stiles ‘dyadya’, now, which means uncle, right?”

Isaac nodded. “Then we’re family, and I always, *always*,” his voice turned fierce, “protect my family.” His voice was a low growl, and there was a lot more there than a simple declaration of protection, enough that Isaac didn’t say anything right away, and Derek apologized.

“Uh...thanks? I mean...” Isaac paused and let out a sigh. “I’m grateful, like I said, you’re just...kind of intense.”

Derek sighed as they got into his car, but he didn’t start it, he leaned his head against the steering wheel.

“What do you know about my past?” He finally asked.

“Uh...” Isaac felt a little put on the spot, but got over it as Derek was willing to open up to him. He spoke a little hesitantly: “Your uncle burned down your house...accidentally, and your entire family died...I’m sorry.” He added

awkwardly.

“It’s alright, but that’s...that’s just what we came up with so that people didn’t treat me like a freak.”

Isaac hated that his first was that Derek *had* been kind of seen as a freak at school, or at the very least, absolutely unapproachable.

“So, what really happened?”

“It wasn’t an accident. Peter...Peter was diagnosed schizophrenic. It’s...people always talk about how painful it is watching a loved one fall to Alzheimer’s or cancer, but...the life of someone living with a schizophrenic is even harder...It has to be.” He whispered, his voice breaking, and though he was unsure if it was helpful he slowly reached out and patted Derek on the back, smiling a little when Derek didn’t shrug him off.

“Peter had ups and downs. There would be some days...” Derek leaned back and a smile flitted across his face. “Some days he would be Peter, my uncle, and we would play basketball or go swimming, and the others...a dark cloud entered his head, and he changed. We’d find him in his room writing out...long manifestos.”

“Manifestos?” Isaac question, and Derek nodded.

“Kill lists. He was fixated on the idea of werewolves, witches, vampires...fantasy creatures. I...I was worried, and I begged my mom to send him to a place where he could get help, you know?”

Isaac nodded, even though he really didn’t. His father had been ‘psychotic’, but only in the layman way. Isaac had not had to deal with a serious mental issue in the family.

“So...did she listen?” Isaac asked, knowing the answer. If Derek’s mother had listened, they might still be alive.

“She didn’t. It was all so...random. I was in my rebellious phase at the time...” He let out a dark chuckle. “What kind of world is it where cigarettes saved my life? I went out because a friend of mine would sneak me some, and when I came back...I had to fight him off. He tried to drag me inside, he said...I was the last wolf, and he had to get rid of me.” Derek’s breathing quickened, but his

voice remained steady. "I...I still remember what his eyes looked like, so full of malice and confusion." He shook his head.

"So, you got away?" Isaac asked.

Derek shrugged. "I don't know if I would have. I was so...I wanted to go in, I could hear the screaming, and I was...so focused on getting in and rescuing them, but...I couldn't. The cops arrived, and they subdued him, and by then..." It wasn't until then that Derek's voice hitched, and a tear escaped, rolling slowly into his stubble.

"I lost right members of my family that day, nine, if you count Peter, which I still do. They took him to Eichen House, and I had to live on my own from that point forward." Derek shook his head, and wiped his eyes. "Sorry."

"It's alright to talk about your family, Derek."

"The *point*." Derek said, his voice becoming firm once more. "The point is that since that day, I've considered very few people family. Stiles, of course, his father, Melissa, Scott, and...you and Sergei. And since that day, I've sworn to myself that I will never let anyone or anything harm my family, again. I don't know who this fucker is, Isaac, but he's not getting you or my nephew without going through me." He turned to Isaac and his eyes turned to a glare, but one of resolve and determination, instead of anger.

Isaac was touched. More than touched, he realized that there was a lump in his throat, though he wasn't sure that he was crying until he felt the warm, salty tears leaking across his face. The first sob ripped through his chest, and though Derek looked surprised, he pulled Isaac to his chest, allowing him to cry there.

Isaac felt like such a fool. Crying in the arms of someone who was still something of a stranger, but *that's* what was pulling at his heart.

"Uh...I really, *really* don't mind, but is something wrong, Isaac?"

"You called...called him your...your...your nephew." Isaac sobbed.

"I'm sorry if-."

"That's..." Isaac interrupted. "That's not...not bad, Derek. It's...you don't know

us. You...you called us family...I...I..." Isaac's sentence dropped and he coughed from the force of his crying, the ring of protection that he had from people he hadn't known days earlier, felt amazing. Like it was reawakening his soul after it had only beat just for Sergei. When he had all but given up on having anything except a poverty stricken life with his son, he had come home, and found that within days, there were good people in the world, people who were willing to care for him and his son.

"Just breathe, man, it's alright."

Isaac managed to get his breathing under control, before he finally spoke, again. "You hardly know us, and you're sitting here telling me that we're family, and that you're going to protect us. Two weeks ago, I was sitting in my apartment, watching Sergei sleep, and I didn't know what we were going to do. I thought that we were going to be on the street, panhandling for something, and now... now I'm sitting in my best friend's fiancé's car, and he's telling me that I'm family."

"So...that's not a bad thing?"

Isaac smacked Derek in the shoulder. "Of course it's not, it's very sweet. Who thinks that being family is a bad thing? Especially someone who has literally no one except his son?"

"You've got more, now. Me, Stiles, and Jordan."

#

Isaac received an armful of son when he walked through the door, his little crying spell was finished, so there was no shame or hiding, when he fell to his knees to embrace Sergei properly.

Sergei was his core, his rock, but Derek's story and the following speech had reminded Isaac that he had some walls now, too. There were only three of them, but they were strong and sturdy.

"Papa! There were so many cool things at the mall, we didn't even see them when we went." Sergei began, excitedly. "There were puppies and kitties and... and...kroliki?" Sergei made it a question and Isaac nodded.

“Bunnies.” He said, and Sergei nodded, not even seeming to care about the semantics, anymore.

“And there was a big, tall man at a booth who was breathing steam. He offered it to dyadya Stiles, but he said, no, and wouldn’t even let me try.”

“Er...e-cigs.” Stiles said, giving Sergei a small smile, and Isaac understood immediately why his son had been barred.

“Those are really for adults, Seryozha. Why don’t you tell me what else you did?”

“Well, we spent a lot of time with the puppies, there was one whose name was Zvezda, and the woman who kept the puppies said his name was Sasha, and I tried to correct her, but she didn’t seem to understand, papa. But then I remembered what you said about me being special, and that not everyone can speak Russian, so I stopped trying to change her mind.”

“Then I’m very proud of you.” Isaac said, stepping into the house properly, arming the alarm, and scooping Sergei up to put him on the kitchen island.

“Oh, and dyadya let me get a tattoo.”

All the air in Isaac’s lung came out in a *whoosh*, and he turned, sputtering to his supposed best friend, who quickly held up his hands in self-defense.

“It’s temporary, man. As in, it will only be there for a week. I told him to mention that when he brought it up.”

“But, dyadya, it doesn’t sound as awesome when it’s temporary, you said so yourself.”

It did sound like a thoroughly Stiles thing to say, and knowing that it was merely painted on his chest, Isaac looked at the skull and crossbones with interest.

“Very cool, Seryozha. Just promise me that you’ll talk to me before you get a real one...and not until you’re like...sixteen.”

“Obeshchayu, papa.”

“How did everything go?” Isaac asked Stiles, preparing himself for anything that might have happened, but Stiles smiled.

“Everything went good, no problems of any kind.” Stiles said, patting Isaac on the back. “How about you.”

“I now know how to use such a thing, which is good. Derek said that I wasn’t totally inept.”

“Actually, you did really well, better than I did my first time out.” Derek said as Sergei huffed and crossed his arms.

“What’s wrong, Seryozha?”

“You guys are keeping a secret from me, and I don’t like it.” He said, glaring at Isaac, who chuckled, and kissed his head.

“Seryozha, have I ever done anything bad to you?” He asked.

Sergei shook his head. “No, papa.”

“So trust me when I say that what we’re talking about is important, and it’s all to keep you safe.”

“But we’re family, papa. I’m supposed to be able to protect you, too, and maybe I could help.”

Isaac’s heart clenched as he turned to his son and smiled. “You are so brave, Sergei. And trust me, you *do* help, by being here for me. You’re my little knight in shining armor. For the time being, though, I need you to just trust that I have your best interests at heart when I say that this is something that the adults need to handle.”

Sergei didn’t look happy about it, but he nodded, which gave Isaac a little relief. He was willing to fight, but this was one issue that he would not back down on.

“Babe, is everything alright?” Jordan asked a little while later when Isaac called him.

“There’s some things I’m going to have to deal with at some point, but for now,

everything's good."

"Something...bad?" Jordan said, sounding a little worried, but Isaac just chuckled, and turned his back so he could whisper.

"Sergei is smart, I mean, if it's only matter of time before he realizes what's going on, and that's going to...pose problems later."

"Let's cross that bridge when we get to it, did anything happen, are you home safe?"

Jordan's care brought forth a blush and grin from Isaac.

"Yeah, vydrachka, we're home safe, and nothing happened, thanks to you. It was a little weird, though, since I'm not sure who was following me."

"Oh, babe, I'm sorry, I didn't even think to have him introduce himself. I just-."

"Wanted to keep me safe. Relax, vydrachka, I'm not mad or anything, it's just... I'm not used to having a police escort."

It was better to have an officer that he didn't know following him than risk exposure to his stalker, though.

"Well, there's something that might help that, I'll talk to you about it, tonight."

The reminder brought another smile to Isaac's lips. He still had a whole night of seeing Jordan to look forward to. The very thought was simply pleasurable, like the prospect of getting to play with Sergei or eating a doughnut. He didn't have to think about it, he didn't have to concentrate, it was merely the thought of getting to see Jordan.

"I can't wait to see you, tonight." Isaac said, suddenly, not feeling as embarrassed as he would have, before. He wanted Jordan to know how he felt, and practically giggled when Jordan responded.

"I can't wait, either. I...I want to ask you something, and it's going to sound like a hint, but I promise that it's not, okay?" Jordan asked, causing Isaac to let out a nervous chuckle.

“Okay.”

“Did you make anything?”

Jordan had been right, it did kind of sound like a hint, but Isaac didn’t mind.

“I can make you something if you like.”

“No, see, that’s what I meant. I was only asking because I was thinking of picking up pizza when I came over, but I didn’t want to if you had already started something.”

“Pizza sounds good.” Isaac said.

Notes for the Chapter:

Shchenki i kotyata! = Puppies and kitties!

Obeshchayu = I promise

I think that Isaac's reaction to shooting his first gun was fun. Personally, I'm not a fan of guns, but in this case, I think that I'd make an exception.

27. Pizza and skittles.

Summary for the Chapter:

The stalker strikes again.

Isaac

To pass the time while he was waiting for Jordan, Isaac decided to ask Stiles to help him with his application for the college. It was easy to get Sergei to agree to play with Derek while they worked. Sergei seemed to be forming a bond with Derek, one that Isaac was only too happy to allow. It wasn't only that Derek would be able to protect Sergei if something happened to him, though it was a bonus, it was more of the fact that despite his grumpy exterior, he had great parenting skills. Isaac was completely assured that the day that Stiles and Derek decided to adopt a kid, Derek would make an excellent father. Which wasn't to say that Stiles didn't have his charms, but Isaac saw Derek as more paternal than his friend.

"I'm not too sure about this." Isaac said, as he wrote in his job history. "I mean...doesn't he want to see something more impressive than pizza delivery guy?"

"I told you, man, I got you in the door, this is just so he can see who you are. Don't be embarrassed about where you worked to provide for Sergei."

"Ya ne stydno!" Isaac snapped, feeling defensive. He had felt a lot of things in his life, embarrassment when it was required, but never about doing what he had to, to feed his son. The jobs he had worked had been menial, debasing, and all around boring, but he wouldn't change a moment, because Sergei survived because of all of it.

Stiles looked a little shocked at Isaac's outburst and it went straight to Isaac's heart.

"Sorry." He whispered. "Talk about being embarrassed." He added with a weak chuckle.

"It's alright, man." Stiles said, reaching out and patting his back. "I didn't mean

any offense, and besides...you did good. Put it on there, and if he says a single frakking word, I'll strangle him with his necktie."

Isaac gave Stiles a grin, glad that his terrible behavior had not thrown Stiles off.

"An essay?" He asked, looking at the next question which asked him to respond in a series of paragraphs: *detailing how you could benefit Beacon Hills Community College and contribute to the education with the students who have chosen our prestigious institution to further their education.*

"Aren't I supposed to the teacher?"

"This is the best part!" Stiles argued. "And I'm not just saying that because I'm teaching English literature. Just tell him why you took philosophy, and why you think it could be important for future generations to do the same thing."

Stiles was actually brilliant. Isaac was fully willing to concede that fact, and the way that he described how Isaac could complete the essay was perfect, but before the pen even touched the paper, the doorbell rang, and Isaac was forced to reckon with shame again as he jumped up from his chair, sliding in the process and landing on the ground.

Stiles laughter was taunting in a playful way as it trailed into the living room, before he spoke.

"Why hello, deputy." Isaac was a little wounded that Stiles had been the one to answer the door, but was quick to forgive when Stiles stalled so he could get up from the floor. "Did you happen to look at my jeep?"

There was no response for a moment, before Jordan let out a whistle. "Five years before we have to have the talk, again...Impressive."

"Having Sergei around gives me a sense of responsibility."

Jordan laughed, but his smile grew even wider when Isaac came into view. He was wearing a black shirt with a red lion on it and the words: *Hear Me Roar* and a pair of jeans with flip flops, which actually drew a blush from Isaac, who had once or twice leaned to a kinkier side of life...at least in his head. He was carrying six pizza boxes, and the smell made Isaac's stomach grumble.

“Hey, babe.” Jordan said, placing the boxes down, and walking up to Isaac and planting a kiss on his cheek, washing Isaac in his musky aftershave.

“Vydrachka.” Isaac had only spoken to him a few hours earlier, but he had still missed the man’s presence.

“Any problems?” He asked, looking around the house as though he expected the stalker to be there.

“No. Stiles and I were working on my application, and Sergei is in the-.”

“Mr. Parrish!” Sergei cried, running into the room.

“Sergei is in here.” Isaac finished with a fond smile.

Without any prompting, Jordan pulled a pack of Skittles from his pocket and handed them to Sergei.

“Thank you, Mr. Parrish!” Sergei said, taking the bag and opening it, before giving him a few.

“You’re welcome, Seryozha.” Jordan said around his candy.

“And pizza?” Sergei’s eyes widened at the wonders of the man who provided pizza and candy. The thought made Isaac wonder if Jordan was helping to ease his transition into their lives. It wasn’t a direct bribe, but it was enough that Sergei didn’t view Jordan as a threat.

Or maybe it was simply because Jordan was such a kind man. He had won Isaac over, and Sergei may have been protective, but he was also smart, smart enough to see when someone made Isaac happy, which Jordan did.

“It’s got to be pizza, kiddo, every other take-out place here is terrible. There’s a life lesson you learn while living here: never trust shawarma from a place that considers it Mexican food.”

It was a thoroughly odd thing to say, but it was endearing, nonetheless. Sergei watched him for a moment, before cocking his head.

“What a shwarma?”

Stiles and Jordan both gasped, and Derek let out a groan, though he was the one to explain.

“It’s just meat, but they like it because of The Avengers.”

Stiles opened his mouth, no doubt to begin another nerd debate, but Jordan spoke first.

“Ya skuchal po tebe segodnya.” He said, his pronunciation actually very good. “Sorry, Stiles, but I had to get that out before I forgot it.”

As always, the Russian made Isaac feel giddy. Jordan’s willingness to share in his culture was certainly one of the most attractive things about him. Isaac didn’t really care if Jordan never actually learned Russian, the fact that he was willing to speak a sentence every time that they met was heartwarming.

“Did I say that right?” He asked after a moment, looking around nervously.

“More or less, your pronunciation is getting better.”

“There’s a feature on the website that speaks the phrase for you, and...no R’s” Jordan said his face burning red as he seemed to find his toes fascinating.

“You’ll get the hang of it, and as always, I’m just happy that you even made the effort. I would’ve been happy with just hearing ‘dasvidanya’ from you.”

“I don’t like saying good-bye, though. I prefer ‘privet’.”

Isaac’s heart thudded painfully under the smoldering stare of Jordan.

“You’ve got to stop that.” Isaac said with a chuckle, hating himself when Jordan’s face fell.

“Too much?” He asked, his words a nervous clutter. “I’m...I’m sorry, I-.”

Isaac, despite having an audience, reached out to place a finger on Jordan’s mouth, wanting that smile back.

“Not at all, I’m just saying that if you make me blush any more, I might pass out. There’s nothing that you’ve yet done that I find repulsive or bad.”

“Yet.” Jordan reminded. “But we’ve only known each other a few days, I could disappoint you, yet.” Jordan admitted.

“Well, I’m far from perfect, myself.”

Serge growled, and marched straight up to Isaac before punching him in the leg. It wasn’t hard, but it got his point across.

“Papa, ya skazal vam ne skazat' eti veshchi! You’re a good papa!”

“He’s not wrong.” Jordan said. “I don’t even know what he said first, but he’s not wrong.”

“Sergei doesn’t like it when I disparage myself.” Isaac said, crouching so he could be at his son’s level. “But I wasn’t saying that I was a bad papa, so don’t go all silent on me, okay?”

Sergei eyed him critically for a moment, but didn’t speak.

“Sergei, there’s a difference between noticing flaws and saying I’m a bad father. Everyone has flaws...except you, you’re perfect.” Isaac was much too attached to his son to say that he was anything less than perfect.

“You’re a good papa.” Sergei said.

“I’m a good papa.” Isaac repeated with a smile.

“You’re the *best* papa.”

“I’m the best papa.”

Sergei wrapped his arms around Isaac’s neck, and kissed his cheek, and Isaac hugged him back. The fact that Sergei took it upon himself to force Isaac to admit his accomplishments made Isaac feel good about himself. Sergei knew exactly how to give him a boost when he didn’t even know that he had needed one.

Jordan was silent, letting them have their moment, not speaking until Isaac stood up, again.

“You’ve got a smart kid, babe. And I have yet to see any of these flaws that you’re talking about.”

#

“So, what was the thing you wanted to talk to me about?” Isaac asked in-between bites of pizza a little while later.

Jordan’s eyes clouded in confusion for a moment, before they widened and he began to blush.

“Well...Okay, so you can say no, and that would totally be fine, and everything. I’ll smile and be happy if you say no. I mean, it’s early...in the relationship, so rejecting this wouldn’t hurt me as much as if we had been...say, dating for eight months...”

Isaac’s jaw dropped, before he grinned fondly. It appeared as though Jordan could, on rare occasions babble to a degree that would make Stiles proud. Indeed, Stiles was watching the deputy with a raised eyebrow, and in a move that he himself probably never got to make, interrupted Jordan.

“Jordan...babbling.” He said with a smile. “Oh, that felt good.”

Jordan blushed harder, if possible, before nodding. “Right. So, Isaac, it’s still a week away, but...” He paused for only a moment before speaking very quickly, “there’s this picnic that takes place for us...that is the sheriff’s department, and I’d like to ask you to be my date.”

Isaac chuckled, feeling as though Jordan’s nervousness had been adorable, but unnecessary. He would, of course, say yes to going with him, and was in fact thrilled that the man had offered.

“I would love to be your date to the picnic.” He said, feeling another eruption of butterflies when Jordan looked elated. “Sergei, does that sound like a good idea?”

Sergei looked up from his paper plate, pizza sauce covering his face. “I can go?” He asked.

“Of course, kiddo. Why wouldn’t we want you there?” Jordan asked.

“Well...papa said that sometimes he would have friends and that he would sometimes be with them alone.” Sergei said, his voice brave.

“This isn’t one of those times. I want you to come with us and have fun.” Jordan said.

Sergei smiled, but Isaac missed his short response, having jumped when Jordan’s hand reached for his under the table. It wasn’t uncomfortable, it had just been a little surprising, but after a moment, Isaac allowed his hand to be engulfed in the warmth.

“I’ll see you between now and then, right?” Isaac asked, quietly when Sergei had gone back to his food, and Derek and Stiles were talking about going to Age of Ultron.

“You can see me as often as you like.” Jordan said, swooping in for a quick peck on Isaac’s cheek.

“Do you mean that?”

Jordan opened his mouth to respond when Isaac’s phone vibrated to alert him to a text message. It was confusing to Isaac since anyone who would call or text him was right there in the dining room with him.

“Sorry.” He muttered, before looking down at the message.

Isaac screamed.

Notes for the Chapter:

Ya ne stydno = I'm not ashamed

Ya skuchal po tebe segodnya = I missed you today

Papa, ya skazal vam ne skazat' eti veshchi = I told you not to say those things!

Muwahahahaha

I'll just slink away now.

28. I'm Not Sick, But I'm Not Well

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan tries to console Isaac after he receives the terrifying text message.

Jordan

The sound that came from Isaac made Jordan jump and flinch. It was heart wrenching, the howl of a man who had truly seen something terrible, and Sergei had to clamp his hands over his ears, while Stiles and Derek both cursed.

“Isaac, babe, what is it?” Jordan asked, but Isaac wasn’t listening. His face was pale, and he was staring at his phone with eyes wide in horror. The slip to his panic attack was just as sudden, and Jordan felt the familiar worry and anger curling in his stomach. The stalker had done something again, and for all his attempts to protect Isaac, it had been for naught.

The next crash was even more frightening, but only because Isaac seemed to be slightly crazed. He had dropped his phone on the table and fallen out of his chair, he got up quickly, though, and moved to Sergei, picking him up, and pressing him to his chest, before collapsing to the ground and rocking with his son, dry sobs echoing through the kitchen.

That Isaac had the coherence to grab a hold of his son was reassuring, but when Jordan moved to get up, Isaac flinched, and Jordan didn’t know if it would do good or harm for him to try and comfort the man. He was panicking himself, though. Isaac was freaking out, and he didn’t know what to do. It was as though the stalker had, with one message, shattered the innocent, happy man that he had come to care for, and Jordan didn’t know what to do about it.

It was Stiles who took charge. Getting up very carefully, he approached Isaac on tiptoe, and knelt beside him.

“Dyadya Stiles, what’s wrong with papa?” Sergei asked in a whisper that sounded terrified. That he was using English was a good sign, though. Or perhaps not, maybe it was out of desperation. “Help him.”

“I’m going to, kiddo, but your papa needs to hold you for a minute, is that okay?”

Is he hurting you?”

Jordan glared at Isaac. He truly believed that Isaac would never harm Sergei, not with a gun to his head, but Stiles shook his head at the mean look.

“He’s panicking, he’s not thinking rationally. I’ve punched Derek.” He explained, quickly and quietly.

That caused Jordan to flinch. He knew that Isaac would completely shut down if he ever harmed Sergei, even unintentionally.

“He’s not hurting me, dyadya, he’d never hurt me.” Sergei argued, defensively, while Isaac held him and trembled, letting out shaking breaths.

“I know, I was just checking.” Stiles said.

Jordan hated himself for saying it, but he couldn’t bear to see Isaac so...broken.

“Didn’t slapping him help last time?” The words came out in a disgusted grunt, because he abhorred allowing harm come to Isaac, even though he knew that it might help.

Stiles grimaced and moved towards Isaac, but Isaac flinched and his hands tightened around Sergei.

“What does the text say?” Derek asked, putting a hand on Stiles’ shoulder to stop him from doing what he looked tempted to do. Sergei was much too close and confused to witness his father being hit.

Unable to do anything else, Jordan reached out for Isaac’s phone, which was still lit with the text message. Jordan had to master the impulse to be sick, for what he what he saw riled a wave of bile in his throat.

Baby. How was your day? I saw that you went shooting, which makes me a little jealous, but I think I can get the hang of it on my own. When I learn, do you think that Sergei would like me more with a gun? I miss you and Sergei so much, but I guess you’d rather hang out with your cop friends. Not mad, though, love you. Your one true love.

The stalker knew exactly what Isaac had done that day, might of known that

Jordan had asked him to go to the picnic, and may have even threatened Sergei. In fact, Jordan would have paid his next fifty paychecks to bet that *that* had been what had caused him to freak out. Where Isaac's paternal instincts had caused him to shut down, though, Jordan's protective instincts caused him to become enraged.

Isaac

"Papa, ya boyus."

Three words were all it took. Sergei's frightened voice was like an antidote to whatever weak part of Isaac's brain that seemed to shut down in the face of danger. Sergei's fear was practically tangible and it pulled him out of his panic attack, until all he could see was his son's face.

"Oh, Seryozha, I'm so sorry." He whispered, placing his hands on either side of Sergei's head and kissing his forehead. He felt as though his limbs were made of jelly, and he came to realize that the shaky post-adrenaline rush was almost as bad as the panic attack itself. He felt weak, and his entire being wanted nothing more than curl up in bed with Sergei, and hide from the world.

"Papa, what happened?" Of all the people in the world, the last person that Isaac expected to be mad was Sergei, but his son's fear seemed to have given way to anger. He was glaring at the present company, Isaac included.

"It's nothing, Sergei."

"No, papa, you're lying." Sergei squirmed until he escaped from Isaac's grasp, which caused a new wave of panic. "You said that lying was bad."

"Sergei, I'm not...It's...this is a grown-up issue."

"Not when you're so scared, papa. When I'm scared, you make me tell you what's wrong, and now you're scared, and you won't tell me why!" Sergei took a step back, and the thud of his shoes echoed in his skull, chilling him to the bone.

"Sergei, come here." Isaac pleaded, opening his arms, but for the first time in

their lives, Sergei shook his head at the offer of affection, and Isaac swore his heart stopped for a moment.

“No, if you’re not going to tell me, then I don’t want to speak to you, papa.” And Sergei stormed off to his bedroom, and slammed the door.

Isaac was floored. He forgot for a moment what his panic attack had even been for, because his son, the one thing that he cared about more than anything in world had slammed a door in his face.

“Sergei!” Isaac cried, standing up and moving to rush to the room, but a hand on his shoulder made him jump and freeze.

He turned to find Jordan, who was looking at him with great concern and worry, and Isaac felt guilt rush through him. The text message and Sergei’s fit would obviously affect him more, but he knew that Jordan had probably just watched Isaac break down while being unable to do anything.

“Isaac, are you alright?” Jordan asked, and Isaac shook his head.

“No, vydrachka,” Isaac said, hoping the word reminded Jordan that he was somehow worth dating. “I’m really not. Did you see that message? He was *watching* me, Jordan. How is that...How did...Jordan, he...” Isaac was panicking, again, something that if he had the capacity to care about, he would probably feel was a deal breaker for their relationship, but he was neither rational, nor right. Jordan wrapped his arms around Isaac while he had a second nervous breakdown, and helped him collapse to the ground.

“Even without Sergei here, I’m not going to slap you, I just don’t have it in me. So instead, I want you to listen to my breathing, and try to match it.”

Isaac complied, resting his head against Jordan’s chest, finding contentment and succor in his heartbeat more than his breathing, but the important thing was that it calmed him, *Jordan* calmed him.

“I won’t let him hurt you, babe” That word was far more comforting than the contact. “I won’t let him harm your son, you’re safe with me.”

“He was following me, Jordan, he knew where I was. He fucking threatened my *son*.” It hadn’t been direct, but for Isaac, the worse part of the text had been the

thinly veiled reference to the mixture of his son and guns. When it was Isaac, it was one thing, but this stranger bringing a firearm anywhere near Sergei was a horrifying thought.

“And I’m going to keep you two safe.” Jordan repeated. “Stiles is on the phone now, getting his father here. He sent you a text, which means that we can track his phone.”

It was good news, but Isaac was still broken at the thought of his son hating him. He would have to tell the truth, or at the very least come up with a lie that was convincing enough. However, more lying could create more problems. If Sergei ever found out what was really happening to them, he might hate Isaac even more.

“I made a mistake with Sergei.” He whispered. “He knows...He’s so smart and he knows that something is wrong and now he hates me.”

“You did raise a very smart kid, Isaac, but I doubt that he hates you, he’s at an age where he doesn’t want to be excluded from grown up things.” Jordan said.

“Not to mention that the last time that you hid something from him, it was you being sick, you ended up in the hospital, Isaac.” Derek added.

It was a very odd that their words could simultaneously make him feel better and worse at the same time. He had lied before, and that was an old wound that they had opened, but it also gave him hope, because Derek was probably right, Sergei was probably just a little miffed that Isaac was hiding the truth, again, which caused another pang of guiltiness to invade Isaac’s heart, because he had begun to develop a pattern of deceit in his son, which was the complete opposite of how he wanted to raise his son.

“So, I should tell him, don’t you think?” It was the first time that Isaac had sought advice on raising a child since Sergei had had colic. He prided himself on having raised his son on his own, but there was a point where he needed to get help in doing the right thing, and he had reached it the moment he had a second panic attack.

“Isaac, that’s...up to you.” Jordan said, quickly, but then he added; “I wouldn’t, though. You told me that you brought him here to have a sense of security and the fact that this sicko has slipped through our fingers so far won’t make him feel

safe.”

Jordan had used Isaac’s own words to give him advice, which was something that he hadn’t been expecting. It wasn’t such a big deal at the end of the day, but it told Isaac that Jordan was willing to help parent, without trying to take the reins too much, which might help if their relationship became something more stable, and it came to giving Sergei advice or instructions.

“He’s never stormed away from me like that, though. I mean...there was one time when I took his stuffed bear because he kept whacking me in the shin with it, but...” Isaac let his sentence drop miserably. It was bad enough knowing that Isaac had so far been unable to do anything to stop the stalker.

“Why don’t we go and talk to him? Would that make you feel better?”

Isaac nodded, but he really wasn’t sure. If Sergei was still upset, he probably wouldn’t even talk to Isaac and then he would end up feeling even worse. His heart was still thundering over the text he had received, and Isaac just really want to grab Sergei and lock himself away from the world for a little while, preferably on a deserted island that could only be found by those who already knew where it was. Jordan would, of course, be invited.

Jordan held Isaac’s hand as they approached and gave it a reassuring squeeze, before Isaac knocked.

“Sergei, ty v poryadke?” Isaac asked through the door. Sergei didn’t respond directly, but when Isaac placed his ear against the door, he heard soft sniffles coming from the room.

Opening the door, slightly more hurried than he had originally meant to, Isaac found Sergei curled up on the bed with his back turned to him.

“Sergei, can you talk to me, buddy?” Isaac asked, sitting on the bed.

“No.” Sergei huffed, his voice thick with tears.

“Son, I’m sorry that I lied to you, but sometimes...sometimes adults have to keep things from kids.” Isaac said, ruffling Sergei’s hair.

“Last time you were dying, papa, so I don’t want any secrets between us. My

sem'ya, but you're keeping things from me."

"Sergei, life is...you're young and innocent, and life has a way of destroying that, I'm trying to protect you, but I promise that I'm not sick or dying this time, this secret is something else."

"You father understands why you're mad about him keeping a secret because of what happened last time, but I can promise you, Sergei, he's not sick."

"Then what is it, really?"

Isaac sighed, not finding his son very malleable to accepting that there were some things that he simply could not know, but Isaac couldn't bear for his son to hate him, either.

Isaac hefted Sergei up and spun him around so that they were facing each other.

"Sergei, there's nothing wrong that you need to worry about, okay? There's something difficult that I'm dealing with, I'll admit that, but I'm not sick or dying, and I promise to never let anything come between us. Son...it hurts me when you're mad at me."

Sergei looked up, remorse and guilt written on his face, for which Isaac felt a little bad.

"Papa, please don't be mad, I just didn't want any secrets because you were hurt last time." He threw himself into Isaac's arms which was the greatest relief he had experienced in a long time. Jordan's obvious attachment to their relationship was a close second, but Sergei would always have precedence.

"I'm not mad, Sergei, but...I miss you, even when you're mad at me for a few minutes." Isaac let out a chuckle as he realized how dependent he was on his son, but more importantly, how little he cared. Their reliance on one another had gotten them through hard times, and Isaac wasn't about to feel guilty about it.

"Mr. Parrish, will you tell me if my papa is sick?" Sergei asked, turning to Jordan. It was a little painful that Sergei didn't trust him, but it was mitigated by the fact that he was willing to trust Jordan.

"Uh...yes, Sergei, if anything happens to Isaac, I promise to tell you."

“I trust you, papa, but I don’t like seeing you scared.” Sergei said, curing up against Isaac’s chest which Isaac found more comforting than even Jordan’s hand in his. He liked Jordan...a lot, but he *needed* his son, more than anything.

“Well, then, I’ll stop being scared.” Isaac said as if it was that easy. His reaction had been completely automatic, but if it was what he needed to keep his son’s peace of mind, he would do it.

Notes for the Chapter:

ya boyus= I'm afraid.

Finally, the answer to what Isaac was screaming at. I'm sorry, I just didn't want to update until I had updated Fangs and Claws. I'll post again when I can.

I really like the maturing Sergei, he's learning, even if that's not for the best.

29. Nowhere Safer than Hogwarts.

Summary for the Chapter:

Stiles tries to come to grips with the fact that he hasn't been able to help Isaac.

Stiles

“Dad, it really freaked him out. I’m talking full on panic attack.” Stiles said, while John rubbed the bridge of his nose. Stiles was still a little worried for Isaac, maybe even more so for Sergei who was no doubt confused about the strange things that were happening. Stiles was glad that Isaac had taken the advice to keep Sergei in the dark, but wondered how long that would work for.

“I spoke with Matt, he didn’t see anything unusual, and I don’t know how the asshole found him.”

“There’s a veiled threat in there, too.” Derek added in a growl, causing a flame of pride to well up within Stiles at his husband. He would have stood behind Isaac even if Derek didn’t, but it was warming to see that Derek was just as protective.

“When I learn, do you think that Sergei would like me more with a gun...” John muttered, looking down at Isaac’s phone. How he had unlocked it without Isaac’s password was something that tickled Stiles’ curiosity, but not so much that he would bother his father with it right then. “That’s not the only threat, either.” John said. “The simple fact that he mentions even learning how to shoot...We can check the records of the shooting range, and see if there’s anything suspicious there.”

“What about tracing the number?” Stiles asked. “I mean-.”

“No.” John said, shaking his head. “I’ve already had Tara run it and it’s attached to a Burner account. It’s an encryption service and-.”

“I know what Burner does.” Stiles said with a huff, and though John raised an eyebrow at him, he didn’t inquire further, highlighting the importance of the matter at hand.

It wasn't something that was every encouraging, and Stiles himself had told Isaac that they'd be able to track the creep, and now...now there was nothing for them, except the pain of waiting for him to make his next move.

"So, we have nothing? No fingerprints, no cell number, no...records of anything?" Stiles asked, feeling more than a little helpless.

John shook his head. "I've sent everything to be tested, but nothing came back."

"So, what's the next step?" Derek asked, crossing his arms.

"Vigilance." John replied. "It's the only thing that we can do. Keep an eye on Isaac and Sergei, double the watch, he already knows that there's a patrol. Jordan should be here as often as possible, and if you two see anything..."

"We'll call you right away." Stiles said, passing up the opportunity to make a joke. What was happening to his friend wasn't anything to laugh at.

"If I don't end up shooting the fucker myself." Derek said, sounding deadly serious.

"I didn't hear that." John said, though with a small smirk.

Stiles erred on the side of his husband, though. He was fully willing to break the law if it meant that Sergei and Isaac would be safe. He saw Isaac as something of a brother and Sergei as a nephew. The fact that Sergei called him 'dyadya' only cemented that in his mind.

The moment the thought had formed in his mind, Sergei came bursting out of the back room.

"Dyadya Stiles, papa said..." He stopped speaking when he saw John.

"Hello, Mr. Stillinski." Sergei said, smiling at him.

"Hey, kiddo."

"Why are you here, did something bad happen?"

Stiles took the moment that Sergei's head was turned to panic a little and shake

his own head, making it absolutely clear that under no circumstances was Sergei to know the truth.

John raised his eyebrow and rolled his eyes as though he was questioning his son's sanity, before crouching down to Sergei's level.

"I like to visit Stiles sometimes if I have a break. Me and my son are close, just like you and your papa."

Sergei's face scrunched up a little. "Papa never visited me when he was at work."

"That's because I had very mean bosses. John is his own boss so he can do as he likes." Isaac said, coming out of the room, holding hands with Jordan. Stiles smirked at him, and Isaac looked away with a blush.

"Will your new boss at the school be nice and let you visit me?"

"Maybe, but you'll be in school, buddy, so I won't be able to see all the time, but I promise to come visit you, sometimes."

Sergei smiled at the thought of his father coming to visit him at school, and Stiles remembered when John had done the same for him, especially after the death of his mother. It was a little odd to place too much of his thought on it, but Stiles really shared more with Sergei than he did with Isaac. Both of them had lost their mothers, had overly protective fathers that they were attached to, and both had a flair for all things geek. Though that last might have applied to Isaac and Jordan as well, Sergei had the same childish spark within him that Stiles had when he was that age.

"Jordan-." John began, but Jordan cut him off in the perfect way that Stiles had ever seen:

"Another car, eyes open, and stay as close as possible. I know, sir." Sergei didn't even seem phased at the odd string of words, but John, Stiles, Isaac, Derek, and John all knew what they meant. It seemed that there was a way to speak around the child without reporting to Morse code.

It was further impressive because Jordan had correctly identified every point that John had wanted to be covered. He knew exactly what needed to be done to

further provide for Isaac's security and that of his son.

Isaac

Isaac had no choice but to feel better with the new security plans. There was nothing more that he could do, and the idea of spending more time with Jordan wasn't exactly something that he was going to complain about.

Still, Isaac would take a few precautions of his own. For one thing, he wouldn't allow Sergei to leave the house unless he absolutely had to. Naturally, a growing boy would eventually want to run and play, and Isaac *had* promised him a trip to the zoo, not to mention the fact that he had to maintain a specific appearance if he wanted to keep the truth from his son, but he would do his best to distract him and keep him in the house as much as possible.

Isaac would also need to change his number. Fuck that. He would need a brand new phone, with a number of his own choosing, and he'd probably burn his old one. He simply couldn't bear to look again at the message that had been left for him. The digital evidence would always haunt him and it was just as well seeing as the stalker had his phone number.

Isaac felt more than a little guilty over the difficulties that his presence brought, but that evening, when he tried to express his concerns to Stiles, he was quickly waved down.

"Don't mention it. It's not like anyone wakes up and decides to have a stalker." Stiles said, stirring the Alfredo sauce for the dinner they were making, while checking to make sure that Sergei was still watching Guardians of the Galaxy with Jordan and Derek. "I'm not going to abandon you, neither is Derek."

Isaac smiled. The net that Derek, Stiles, and Jordan had created for him was encouraging to say the least. No matter how far the stalker brought him, he found himself wrapped in their embrace, and he knew that he could cope with anything with them by his side.

"I know that you're freaking out, but we're going to handle this, okay?" Stiles placed a hand on his shoulder and Isaac nodded.

“I know, I just...when I saw that text, Stiles, for a moment...I just panicked, because I can’t let anything happen to him.”

“Nothing’s going to happen to him, Isaac. As of this moment, he’s probably the best protected kid in Beacon Hills.”

Isaac let out a chuckle. “That’s true. If we don’t resolve this before the semester starts...Stiles, this is the sort of thing that messes a kid up. Being followed to school by officers, secrets-.”

“He can just tell his friends he’s the son of a business tycoon or a celebrity. I mean...it sounds like a joke, but I’m serious. You can spin this however you like.”

“I shouldn’t *have* to spin anything to my son, he’s not...a constituent.”

“No, but you want to protect him, and he’s bound to notice the cops cars that follow him to school eventually. If you make it out into something...cool, he won’t have as many problems.”

“That’s just more lying.” Isaac snapped, turning the noodles a little vigorously, slopping water over the side, making the burner hiss furiously. “I don’t want to have to lie to my son anymore.” It wasn’t just that Sergei could and probably would find out, but that he didn’t see lying as a positive thing. It would be the same thing as hitting his son, it was just something that a parent shouldn’t do with ease.

“I know you don’t, Isaac, but it’s really the lesser of two evils.” Stiles sighed and turned to him. “Look...I know what it would be like to know that someone wanted to hurt my only parent. Sergei and you are just like me and my father, if I knew that some creep was after him, I would’ve shut down.”

Stiles had a point. If Isaac knew that someone had wanted to do something horrible to Wesley, he would have probably thrown a party and broadcasted his father’s location far and wide. The relationship he had with Sergei was much different, though, and Stiles was right, he would never be able to ease Sergei’s fears once Pandora’s Box had been opened, while if he lied, Sergei would never need to know how terrifying Isaac’s life had become.

“So...lying.” Isaac finally said, feeling defeated, but also furious with his

nameless stalker.

“For the greater good.” Stiles added, nodding. “You know what might cheer you up?”

“A week on a beach with Jordan while Sergei is safe at Hogwarts?” Isaac offered making Stiles laugh.

“That, or this weekend’s dinner. Seeing everyone, remembering the good things about this town might make you feel better.”

Isaac smiled. “It certainly couldn’t hurt, and Sergei had a great time last week. But what about Jordan.”

“He’s a handsome man who’s taken an interest in you.” Stiles aid, looking confused by Stiles’ question.

“No, I meant...didn’t you have him and John switch places last week? Won’t Jordan have to be at the station so your father can come?”

Stiles shrugged. “I’ll leave it up to you. It would be understandable if you wanted him to be here with you.”

“Shouldn’t Jordan be the one to make that decision, though?”

“Shouldn’t I make what decision?” Jordan’s voice ghosted over Isaac’s neck, making him jump about a foot in the air. “Sorry.” He added, his face was sheepish when Isaac spun around to see him.

“It’s okay. We were just talking about this weekend’s dinner. About whether or not you’d want to be here or at work.”

Jordan’s face melted into a mischievous smile. “Well, if you promise not to get mad, I kind of made a change, with John’s permission, of course.”

“What did you do?”

“I was working on Saturdays because...before you? I didn’t have anything better to do with my time. I asked for an alteration to my schedule, though. I work Monday through Friday, now, so I can spend my weekends with someone more

important.”

His words made Isaac’s cheeks flare up, and he grinned.

“You changed your schedule for me?”

Jordan smirked. “There’s a long list of things that I would do for you, babe. Changing my schedule isn’t even the most impressive thing on it.”

Despite the darker tone of that day Jordan had a way of reaching inside of Isaac and twisting his mind about so that he couldn’t help but be happy. That he had Jordan and Sergei in his life made him without a doubt, the luckiest man in California.

Notes for the Chapter:

So, I'm sorry. For both of my fics, I have written barely 10 words for each since I last posted. This semester will be killing me until July 1st, so I can't promise anything until then. If I can post, I will, but otherwise, you'll all have to just...bear with me, please. I'm in class literally 14 hours a day, and do homework in my free time, so...

I can post this, though since I'm still a little ahead.

30. First Instincts

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan explains a bit of his history and Isaac suffers a nightmare.

Isaac

“Dinner was good, babe.” Jordan said. Both of them were in the living room, sitting on the couch, and watching *Memoirs of a Geisha* together. Sergei was asleep on Isaac’s side, and Stiles and Derek had already gone to bed. Though with the waggling eyebrows that Stiles had thrown in his direction, they were doing everything but sleeping. Isaac thanked God that Derek had designed a house with soundproofed rooms.

“Thank you. Italian isn’t normally my forte, but, fettucine is easy enough.” Isaac said, leaning towards Jordan slightly, Jordan took the initiative to scoot the rest of the way over so that Isaac could lay his head on his shoulder.

“I loved it. It’s...it’s nice to have a home cooked meal.” And then almost too quietly, he added. “Again.”

Isaac swallowed and then whispered to him, “Again, like...there was someone else, once?”

Jordan sighed, and Isaac quickly spoke.

“It’s alright. I shouldn’t be prying. Two dates, keep it light.”

Jordan shook his head. “No, it’s alright.” He took Isaac’s hand and held it tight.

“I’ve had a few relationships, but the one that was most important to me was... Darren.” The way that they were positioned, Isaac could not see Jordan’s face, but he heard the wistful tone in his voice, and transferred his full attention to him.

“Darren and I met while I was in the bomb squad. Do you remember the little girl that I spoke to you about?”

With a surge of involuntary anger, Isaac nodded.

“He was the agent that set up her safe house and gathered the evidence against her father.”

“A good man, then?” Isaac asked, and he wondered if Jordan was only single because Darren had died.

“Good is a relative term. He was a good and moral agent, if that’s what you mean. As far as boyfriend material...” He let out a harsh chuckle. “You know, I still don’t know if it was my fault, or his.”

“What happened?” Isaac asked, softly.

“I loved him. We spent so much time together over a series of months, and I fell in love with him. He...” Jordan swallowed. “He wasn’t out, though, and...I don’t think he could love properly, because of it. We snuck around, we didn’t go on proper dates, and he basically treated me like a booty call. I was good enough to have sex with,” he moved his head as though he was checking on Sergei, Isaac did as well, and found his son still asleep, “but not good enough to date openly. I brought it up to him after a few months and...and he told me that he thought we were just having fun. We weren’t dating and we never would.”

Isaac thought back to a day earlier, when he had told Jordan that he didn’t want to hide their relationship, and Jordan’s relieved reaction made much more sense.

“So, the fact that I want our relationship to be open and not a secret...”

“That means a lot to me.” Jordan affirmed. “I know that we don’t love each other, yet, but love can’t grow in the dark, and you’re providing some sunlight.”

“I...I wouldn’t hurt you like that, Jordan.”

“I know that you wouldn’t, because you’re pretty awesome. That you’re willing to let our relationship actually *be* a relationship is important to me, though, and I’m still grateful.”

Isaac smiled, and snuggled himself closer to Jordan, who placed a kiss on his crown. Isaac opened his mouth to say something more, but a yawn snuck out, instead.

“We should head to bed, babe.”

“We, as in...you want to sleep with me, again?” Isaac asked, hopefully.

Jordan snorted. “I’m working on the assumption that I’ll be sleeping with you every night, babe. If you want some times alone, then please, tell me, but I’m... desperately hoping that you won’t, because I like you, Isaac. I like holding you in my arms as we sleep, I like hearing you snore in that cute way,” Isaac blushed, “I liked waking up with you beside me. I-.”

“I wonder what that was like.” Isaac teased a little. He had understood why Jordan had had to get up and ready, Jordan still apologized.

“I’m sorry, babe.” He said, giving Isaac another kiss. “Most importantly,” he finished his earlier thought, “I like knowing that you’re safe.”

Isaac slid himself to sitting position, before crawling into Jordan’s lap, and kissing him on the lips.

“I like you, too.” He gave him a deeper kiss.

“I liked being in your arms.” He lingered on Jordan’s mouth for a moment, darting his lips across the other man’s for a moment.

“I like that you like my snoring.” He allowed his mouth to be invaded by Jordan’s tongue, who moaned as they pressed closer together, the friction caused Isaac to reconsider after only a moment, because he became hard...fast. His eyes traveled to Sergei, and he pulled himself from Jordan’s lap. Jordan easily let him go, though.

“I’m sorry. It’d be...wrong to do this in front of Sergei.” He muttered, looking down. Jordan’s hand came out and lifted his chin.

“You’ve got to stop thinking that taking consideration for your son is a bad thing. I knew what I was signing up for when I asked you out. Sergei is part of the package, and he’s an awesome kid, so he doesn’t detract from it at all, he adds to it.”

Every time that Jordan repeated those words, Isaac came a little closer to fully believing him, though there was still the dark demon in the recesses of his mind

that told him that Jordan would eventually flee.

“Papa?” Isaac found his son’s sense of timing impeccable, and chuckled as he turned to him.

“You ready for bed, Seryozha?”

Sergei nodded, rubbing his eyes and reaching his arms out. Isaac hefted his son up and began to head down the hall.

“Papa,” Sergei began, his voice mumbled by sleep, “Mogu li ya spat' v posteli s vami?”

Isaac paused in his steps and sighed. He wouldn’t be able to do anything else with Jordan if he agreed to Sergei’s request, but he didn’t think he’d be able to look at himself in the mirror if he denied. If he left Sergei with Stiles to take a date, that was one thing, but there was something about his son’s innocent request that Isaac simply could not deny.

“Da, no Jordan budet tam.” Jordan looked interested at the mention of his name, but followed patiently and silently.

“Spokoynoy nochi...papa.” Sergei barely got the words out before his breathing evened out, again. Isaac placed him in his own bed and turned to the confused Jordan.

“He wanted to sleep in my room.” Jordan opened his mouth, but Isaac interrupted. “I know. He’s seven and should learn to sleep in his own bed.” Again, Jordan opened his mouth, and again, Isaac interrupted him. “And yes, I thought about how you and I won’t be able to make out, but he’s-.”

Jordan stopped him by surging forward and kissing him.

“I don’t need an explanation. I found it odd, but only because I couldn’t understand your conversation.” He chuckled. “I really need to learn Russian.”

Isaac let out a breath of relief. “Sorry, I just...I don’t know why defensive is always my first tactic.”

“It’s because you’re a father.” Jordan said, simply. “I can sleep on the couch if

you like.” He added and Isaac shook his head.

“Stay with us, vydrachka?” Isaac asked, and Jordan nodded.

“Of course, babe.” Jordan said, walking into the room.

At first, Isaac tried to set them up as they had been on the couch. He had Sergei at his back while he curled into Jordan’s chest. The fact that Jordan didn’t take a shower added a layer of musk to the man’s cologne, and though Isaac didn’t feel as though he was in a place to admit it, he found the scent alluring.

When they had been there for less than two minutes, though, Sergei woke up, and forced his way in-between them, making Isaac let out a grunt as his son’s elbow found its way into his ribs.

“Sergei, what are you doing?”

Sergei didn’t answer, though, having already fallen asleep. The only sound in the room was a soft chuffing sound. When Isaac squinted, he could see that it was Jordan laughing.

“Oh, come on. You have to admit, this is a little cute.” Jordan said, his trademarked grin making his teeth flash in the dark.

If Jordan wasn’t thrown off about Sergei’s invasiveness, Isaac wasn’t going to be, either. And it was a little cute, though it bore with it a tugging feeling at his heart. The image they now presented was one of a loving family, but Isaac didn’t love Jordan, yet, and Jordan had already admitted to not loving him. Isaac felt a small rush of fear at the thought of what would happen if the picture could never be the real thing. He was ensnared in the charm of Jordan, and if he was allowed to fall, he didn’t think that he would ever recover. The small sting that Dylan had given had lasted long enough, if Jordan rejected him, he would never be able to open his heart, again.

Still, it was reassuring when Jordan reached his arm out to embrace both of them. Isaac was probably just being defensive again, because there was no way to misinterpret that grasp or that smile.

Isaac woke up, yet again to an empty bed. He reasoned that Sergei was eating breakfast or watching T.V. while Jordan was probably in the shower, again. The

thought that he was alone was immediately quashed when he felt an arm wrap around him. Instead of the normal feeling of warmth and security, though, the limb brought a chill down Isaac's spine. He moved to get up when a dark, cold voice spoke in his ear.

"No, stay here, detka."

It definitely wasn't Jordan, Isaac was sure of that, but when he tried to escape, the arm tightened. Isaac could feel the warm breath of the man on his neck, and felt his skin crawl.

"Get off!" He cried, but the man just chuckled.

"Aw, you don't mean that, detka. You know I only want to be with you." It was then that Isaac realized that it was his stalker, and that he couldn't move while he was being held down.

"Let me go, please." He hated how quickly his voice slipped into a pleading whisper, though it was nothing compared to the revulsion that he felt when that whining voice turned to a whimper as the mystery hand reached below the comforter and began to rub his cock.

"Stop." Isaac panted, but the man didn't.

"You see, detka? I can get you hot in a way that fucker cop couldn't." The past tense of the phrase was the thing that scared Isaac the most. What had happened to Jordan that his stalker spoke of him like he was gone?

"No." Isaac felt the first tears fall and his throat tighten as he was molested to tumescence. "Stop, please."

"I'm not going to stop until I make you feel good. I can make you feel good, detka, if you just give-."

"Babe!" Isaac woke up with a start, crying out, covered in sweat, and fighting against the hand touching his arm.

Jordan let out a hiss when Isaac's nails found his skin, but the familiar tone of voice, warm, bright, *Jordan* made him stop fighting, and throw himself into the arms of his boyfriend.

“Babe, what happened?” Jordan asked, sounding frightened.

“He was here, Jordan. He was here and he was holding me and he wouldn’t let go.” Isaac sobbed, the tears from his dream still falling from his eyes as he tried to find security in Jordan’s arms.

“He’s not here, babe, it was only a nightmare.”

Isaac shook his head, his blurry eyes finding his still slumbering son, and he tried to still his erratic breathing so as not to disturb him. He wasn’t sure that he would be able to explain away his condition when Sergei invariably wanted to know what was wrong.

“He found me, Jordan.” He whispered, his fear not having abated, but he was able to power through it in order to keep quiet.

“But it was just a dream.” Jordan lifted Isaac’s head and placed a soft kiss on his lips. “Isaac, you’re safe, Sergei is safe. He’s not going to get you.”

Isaac wanted to argue, and opened his mouth to do so, but Jordan used the opportunity to kiss him. It wasn’t lewd, they didn’t even cross tongues, but it calmed Isaac enough that he was able to stop crying.

“I will die before I allow anything to happen to you, Isaac.” Jordan said. “I can’t protect you in your dreams, but I will keep you safe here.”

Notes for the Chapter:

Mogu li ya spat' v posteli s vami = Can I sleep in bed with you?

Da, no Jordan budet tam = Yes, but Jordan will be there.

spokoynoy noch' = Good night.

Yay for returning to a more normal posting schedule!

31. No Threat

Summary for the Chapter:

The stalker strikes after a night of consolation.

Isaac

Isaac rested his head against Jordan's chest, as the last tremors eased their way from his breathing.

"You know what would help you calm down?" Jordan asked, rubbing his back. Isaac shook his head, and Jordan kissed the side of it. "A shower. You can cool down and if you like...I could...wash your back."

A shower sounded like a miracle. Isaac wanted to wash away the horrible feeling of shame and disgust he felt on the waking side of the nightmare. There was also a thick sheen of sweat that coated his entire body that he wanted to remove. When he turned his gaze to his son, though, he felt a tightening in his heart.

"Sergei..." He whispered, and Jordan hummed.

"We'll lock the door." He said, gently. "The alarm is on, we'd know if someone was inside of the house."

It was logical, but Isaac still wasn't sure if he wanted to leave his son. In his dream, his stalker had made it inside the house, and it for that reason alone that he wanted to remain close to his son.

"Or, I could stay here with him, if you'd feel safe on your own." Jordan offered.

Isaac didn't want to admit it out loud, but he *wouldn't* feel safe. There was a battle being waged within him between his desire to not be alone and his desire to know without a doubt that his son was safe. The latter won out, though. Isaac's paternal instincts wouldn't allow his own fears to leave Sergei unprotected.

"Thank you." Isaac said, quietly, getting up from the bed, and heading into the bathroom, though not without one last look at Jordan who was watching him

with a hesitant grin. Isaac returned it so he could seem strong, before he shut the door.

He didn't collapse until he had started the shower, and it was perhaps for the best, because the sound of the water splashing over his prone form muffled the sound of his crying. Even in the steam and warmth of the bathroom, Isaac shook as he cried, the effects of the nightmare being much more salient than he had realized.

Isaac didn't even hear the door open, and as a result, when a hand touched his shoulder, he flailed a little, slopping water around. It was only Jordan, though, and the look of devastating worry on his face caused Isaac to steel himself enough to stop crying in order to reassure him, but he couldn't stop shaking.

"Babe, what's wrong?" Jordan asked, his eyes firmly locked onto Isaac's, a touch of modesty that under the circumstances, Isaac greatly appreciated.

"It was so real." Isaac explained while Jordan reached out and helped him to a sitting position, before shutting off the water. "I don't know what I'd do if...if he actually got to me."

Jordan pulled a towel from the rack and began to dry off Isaac's hair. "That's not going to happen. We're going-."

"Where's Sergei?" Isaac interrupted, hating himself a little for not having thought of his son earlier.

"Stiles came in. He heard the shower running and wanted to know what was happening, he's in the room with Sergei."

Isaac nodded while Jordan continued to run the towel over his body.

"Isaac, I know that you're scared, I can't even imagine what you're going through, but you shouldn't feel the need to apologize for crying. You've been so strong throughout all of this."

Isaac let out a snort while Jordan helped him to his feet and continued to dry him.

"I don't feel strong, Jordan. I feel pathetic. Who cries over a fucking dream?"

“A man who has a lot to lose. A father who has more love for his son than anyone that I’ve ever seen. And a human being. Isaac. Being stalked is scary, you’re allowed to be afraid.”

“It’s not the fear, it’s...the helplessness. I couldn’t do anything in the dream, and I can’t do anything, now. That’s the worst part of it.”

“You are doing something, though. You contacted the authorities instead of trying to deal with it on your own, you’ve learned how to defend yourself, and you’re keeping a close eye on Sergei. I know that you wanted me to come in here with you, but you chose your son, first.”

There wasn’t a glow or a grin because Isaac was still shaken from the dream, but Jordan’s words meant more than he could have ever admitted. As it was, he kissed the man’s cheek.

“Thank you.” He whispered, his voice having warmed at the fire that Jordan had given him. “I...I needed that.”

“Happy to be of service, babe.”

“Are you alright?” Stiles asked when they had returned to the room. Isaac was leaning against Jordan, feeling very much like being the middle of a cuddle pile involving the deputy and his son. A son who was thankfully, still asleep.

Isaac nodded. “Jordan helped. I just...needed to break down for a moment.”

“I understand, man.”

“Thank you for staying with Sergei, I...I don’t want him alone.”

“No problem.” Stiles said with a smile while he got up from the bed. “I don’t much feel like leaving him alone, either. Don’t ever feel afraid to ask for another set of eyes on him. I promise that it’s no big deal for me to look after him. It’s more fun when he’s awake, but I really don’t mind watching him.”

Stiles slid out of the room leaving Isaac with Jordan, who gently eased him towards the bed.

Isaac felt secure in between his son and Jordan, especially with the latter’s hand

rubbing circles into his back.

His mind was clear and the nightmare didn't return, and Isaac was sure that it had something to do with Jordan's breath over his neck, subconsciously reminding him that he was safe, even into sleep.

Jordan

Though Jordan had fallen asleep with Sergei on the other side of Isaac, it seemed that at some point in the night he had moved so that he was once again in between the two of them. Even though he had to get up and ready for work, Jordan stayed where he was, letting the perfection of the moment course through him. Isaac wasn't awake and therefore, wasn't afraid. Sergei wasn't worried about Isaac's behavior, they were both content and peaceful.

The night before had infuriated Jordan. While he could protect Sergei and Isaac while they were awake, ensure the alarms were set, his boyfriends was armed, and send as many patrol cars as John was willing to let go, the stalker had begun to invade Isaac's dreams, and Jordan couldn't do anything about it.

While he had tried to the best of his abilities to fortify Isaac's confidence the night before, Jordan also felt helpless. His chief concern was Isaac's wellbeing, but he couldn't do his job in the man's subconscious, and it was infuriating. All of his training, every weapon he knew how to use, every way he knew how to defend the things he cared about, and he couldn't do anything about Isaac's nightmares. It was such a simple thing to be defeated by, and that was what was so irritating about it.

Sergei moaned and sat up, rubbing his eyes, before focusing them on Jordan.

"Good morning, Mr. Parrish." He said with a smile. One of the things that Jordan liked best about Sergei was how easily he accepted the current situation of his and Isaac's relationship. Jordan knew that he was too young to understand exactly what was going on, and once he did, he might not be as welcoming, but for the time being, it was certainly helpful towards his desire to spend time with Isaac and protect him.

"Good morning, kiddo. Or should I say: dobroye...dobroye uro?" Jordan felt his

cheeks ignite in embarrassment of messing up. He had thought he had the phrase memorized, but it appeared that he didn't.

"Utro." Sergei corrected without malice or pompousness in his voice.

"Dobroye utro." Jordan repeated and Sergei beamed at him.

"Dobroye utro." Sergei said, pulling the covers from himself, and getting up. "I have to go to the bathroom, but will you play video games with me?"

Jordan frowned. "I have to go to work, kiddo. I'll be back once my shift is over, though, and don't forget, we're going to the zoo this weekend."

"I forgot." Sergei said, grinning wider. "Don't be gone too long, I like it when you're here, and papa is happier with you around."

"I really enjoy spending time with you, too. While I'm gone, you make your papa happy, though."

Sergei nodded. "He's scared, though. " He said, his voice taking on a serious tone. "He won't tell me why, but he's not as scared when you're around."

Jordan knew that Sergei was smart, but considering that the child had been able to convince Isaac that the issue of his fears had been dropped, Jordan was forced to reckon with the true abilities of the boy. Sergei also wondered if the words were true, if Isaac was so much more afraid when he wasn't around.

"Sergei, your papa-."

"Won't tell me and that's okay, because you make him happy, and he's not sick. Just promise that whatever is making him scared won't hurt him. He's my only papa."

"I promise, Sergei, you and your papa are both safe with me around."

Sergei smiled at him again, before getting up and moving towards Jordan, giving him a hug around his middle.

"I like you, Mr. Parrish, and so does my papa, I'm glad that he found you."

“If I remember correctly, it was actually Sergei who found *you* that day in the diner.” Isaac’s voice was a little groggy, but when Jordan looked at him, he had a smile on his face. “If you hadn’t made him feel safe...”

“As I recall, you didn’t exactly see it that way at first.” Jordan said with a smirk while Sergei went back into the bed and cuddled with his father.

“I’m sorry for that. I was panicking because of...everything.”

“It’s no big deal. I’m just glad that you gave me a chance.” Jordan said. “Dobroye utro, by the way.” He added while Sergei looked pleased.

“Good morning, vydrachka.”

“We didn’t wake you up, did we?”

“You did, but that’s alright, I...I’d prefer to be awake when Stiles and Derek leave for work, anyway.” Jordan nodded his understanding. “I take it that that’s where you’re heading?”

“Yeah. A shift, and then I can be back, if...that’s what you want.” Jordan knew that he had been spending all of his time with Isaac, and while he was thrilled at it, he wasn’t sure if Isaac still was.

“Why don’t you head home,” Jordan couldn’t help but let his smile fall, “and grab a few changes of clothes. I’m happy having you here as long as you’re willing to stay.” Jordan’s grin returned, though it was what Isaac said next that truly made him the happiest he had been in a long time. “And it’s not just that you make me feel safe, because you do, but...I really like you, Jordan. It’s selfish, but I simply can’t find it within myself to ask you to leave.”

“It’s not selfish if I like being near you just as much.” Jordan said. “I really like you, too, Isaac. I’ll go home after my shift, and bring over a few things.”

“It doesn’t bother you, paying for rent on a house that you’re not using?” Isaac asked.

Jordan shook his head. “*You’re* not at my house, neither is Sergei, so there’s not as much there for me.” Isaac’s blush and smile was more than a little adorable.

#

Isaac's smile was enough to get Jordan through the day. Though their search for the stalker had brought up no new results, Jordan was able to get through his work with a sense of wellbeing and general happiness. It didn't go unnoticed, either.

"I don't think I've seen you this elated since you started working here." John mentioned while Jordan was filing the report on a missing dog, the second most momentous thing happening in Beacon Hills besides the man who was tormenting Isaac.

"He likes me, boss. I mean...really likes me," John didn't even have to ask who Jordan was talking about", and Sergei spoke with me this morning, he's happy that I'm a presence in their lives."

"Well, you are a great guy, I find it hard to imagine anyone not liking you." John said, his voice serious.

"Thanks, boss, but kids can be fickle. Getting Isaac to like me is one thing, but for Sergei...it'll be an ongoing process. I still don't think he understands what a relationship entails."

"And what *does* your relationship entail at the moment?" John asked, putting down his pen and looking at Isaac.

Jordan understood that he wasn't the only one who felt a protective instinct over Isaac, but John's was a horse of a different color. He was the closest thing that Isaac had to a parent, and therefore, it was no surprise that he was curious about the more intimate details.

"For the moment..." Jordan paused and scratched the back of his head, a little uncomfortable. "For the moment, we've just been making out, and since I've been staying the night, I sleep with him in his room."

"Not rushing things, that's good."

"We've kind of dropped the whole notion of 'rushing things'. If something feels right, we go with it." Jordan explained.

John chuckled. “Well, as long as you two know what you’re doing. You’re heading back?”

Jordan nodded. “I’m going to get some clothes and then go back. I’ll check in with the patrols once I get there.”

“Good. With any luck, soon, you’ll be able to stay the night simply because you want to.”

Jordan signed the last paper and closed the file, handing it to John. “I don’t view this as a duty, sir. I’m vigilant, but I’m never happier than when I am with him, so this isn’t a chore for me.”

Jordan headed towards the door only to bump into Greenburg, who had worried look on his face.

“Deputy Parrish, I was just coming in to get you. There’s...in the parking lot.” Greenburg said, grabbing him by the arm, and dragging him outside.

Jordan smelled the acrid smoke the moment that he stepped out into the sunshine, and his heart sank. It took only second for his fears to become confirmed as he turned the corner and saw his vehicle engulfed in flames.

It would have been simple enough to accept his car being on fire, if it wasn’t for the message spray painted on the asphalt in front of him:

He’s mine. Stay away from him.

Notes for the Chapter:

Dobroye Utro = Good Morning.

Sorry, I forgot to post this earlier. For those who don't read my other fic, I have another after this one planned it will be a crossover of sorts with Bioshock Infinite.

I'm dying for comments, so please let me know...

32. From The Ashes

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan and Isaac head to the mall to get him a new phone.

Isaac

“Hello?” Isaac asked, stirring meat for the fajitas he was making for dinner. He found it a little odd that Jordan was calling around the time that he would have been coming back to the house. Stiles slipped out, as it was his phone that they were having to use for the moment.

“Babe, are you alright?” Jordan’s voice was frantic and it made Isaac immediately tense.

“Yes, why? What happened?” He stopped stirring, prepared to run at a moment’s notice if Jordan told it would be necessary.

“There’s...a new problem has arisen and I wanted to make sure that you and Sergei were okay.”

“What happened?”

“Nothing.”

“Dammit, I’m not Sergei.” Isaac said, checking to ensure his son wasn’t listening. “You can’t hide things from me.”

“He caught my car on fire and spray painted a message for me to leave you alone.”

Isaac felt his heart stop. He had known that it would only be a matter of time before the stalker lashed out at those around him, and yet there was no preparing him for what he had done. At the very least, Isaac could thank God that Jordan hadn’t been harmed. Isaac could only gain so much comfort from that, though. Jordan could now see what the price of dating him was.

“So...will you still send patrols?” He asked, unable to stop his voice from

breaking as he did.

“What are you talking about?”

“If you’re going to leave-.”

“Isaac, no.” Jordan interrupted, his voice becoming firm. *“I’m not going to leave you because of this. This...Isaac, I care about you a great deal. He can burn my car, my house, he can make all the threats he wants, but I’m not going anywhere.”*

Jordan wasn’t leaving. The amount of comfort that that realization brought him was more than Isaac could put into words. He had gone through it before, and the fact that he was willing to stay after being targeted himself felt like a victory.

“Thank you.” Isaac whispered, his voice coming out a little thick, and it took a shaky exhale for him to realize that he was crying.

“Hey, no tears, babe.” Jordan said with a kind confidence. *“I’ll be home soon, and we talk about this more, okay?”*

Isaac nodded, before letting out a ‘yes’ along with a sob. He expected that to be the end of the call, but Jordan stayed on the line for a moment longer.

“Babe, what’s wrong?”

“I...You’re standing by me.” Isaac whispered into the phone. *“You’re not leaving.”*

“Of course not.” Jordan said with a chuckle. *“I told you already, didn’t I? I like you, Isaac, and I’m not going anywhere unless you ask me to leave.”*

“Never.” Isaac didn’t care if it sounded needy. They had decided to say and do what they felt, and Isaac didn’t feel like he could ask Jordan to stay away.

“I’m getting a ride from someone, I stopped by my place, and I’ll be there soon.”

“See you soon, vydrachka.” Isaac said, before hanging up.

Isaac could do little more than panic and cook while he waited for Jordan to

arrive. There was no way that he could risk telling Stiles and Derek about what had happened without alerting Sergei, too. His son, who was playing a video game with them, would no doubt be curious about the new development, and Isaac already felt like he knew too much as it was.

When the doorbell rang, Isaac would have paid any amount of money to deny it, but he rushed towards the door, and upon ensuring that it was, indeed Jordan, threw himself through the door into his boyfriend's arms.

Jordan, for his part, held on just as tightly, though he seemed to be fulfilling a reassuring role rather than an unnerved one.

"I missed you, too." He whispered, his voice stalwart.

"It's not just missing you. He burned your car, vydrachka. Are you hurt?"

Jordan shook his head. "I'm a little upset. I liked that car, but as long as he wasn't fucking with you or Sergei today, I'm better than alright." He placed a soft kiss on Isaac's cheek.

Sergei ran into the room ending the line of conversation. Isaac tried as hard as he could to rearrange his feature to only display the joy that he felt at having Jordan with him, and felt successful when Sergei didn't comment on it.

"Told you that I'd be back." Jordan said to Sergei while Isaac disarmed the alarm. As usual, Jordan pulled a package of Skittles from his pocket, and handed them to Sergei.

"Thank you, Mr. Parrish."

"You bet, kiddo. Mne nraivitsya konfety tozhe."

Again, Isaac was thrilled at Jordan's attempt at Russian, even more so because this time, it had involved Sergei. He never would have guessed that a man who had been indirectly attacked by a stalker would have been calm enough to learn a second language, but Jordan was full of surprises.

Jordan got up and inhaled deeply. "That smells really good, babe."

Isaac blushed at the compliment, but smiled at the domesticity of the moment

and the fact the Jordan seemed to be alright, considering what had happened... What continued to happen.

#

“You have a gift, babe.” Jordan said, putting down his fork, while Stiles and Derek gave nods of agreement.

“Yeah, papa, it was good.”

“Thank you. It’s...cooking for the people that I care for isn’t that big of a deal.”

“Well, we appreciate it.” Derek said, patting his gut.

“Enough to do me a favor?” Isaac asked. He hadn’t checked with Jordan first, but if the stalker was going to maintain his presence, Isaac wouldn’t feel comfortable without a phone of his own. He’d need to change the primary number in Sergei’s phone, as well.

“Of course, what do you need?”

“I was hoping that Jordan might be willing to go to the mall with me to get a new phone, I...I really don’t feel...I need a new one.”

“Can I stay here and play games with my dyadi?” Sergei asked, which was exactly what Isaac had wanted.

“Hence the favor.” He said with a smirk.

“You don’t even have to ask, we love hanging out with Sergei.” Derek said, smiling at the boy.

“And I owe him for kicking my butt at Smash Bros.” Stiles added making Sergei giggle.

#

“Thanks for coming with me.” Isaac said, bumping into Jordan’s shoulder with his own. They were walking through the mall, hand-in-hand, and Isaac was relishing it. Despite the reason that they were there, there was something simple

and comforting about walking with his boyfriend. For a moment, he wasn't worried about the stalker, he was secure in the knowledge that Sergei was safe, and he allowed himself to simply enjoy his life.

"I'll follow you anywhere, babe, unless you ask me to stay with Sergei."

"I trust Derek and Stiles to look after him. I wouldn't be here if I didn't."

"The two patrol cars outside of their house can't hurt." Jordan added with a raised eyebrow and Isaac nodded, though he felt that he would have left Sergei with his friends, even if the police weren't there.

"It's...nice. We never *did* get to have a proper date, and this kind of makes up for that...even if it is my fault."

"Hey." Jordan stopped and with their linked hands, it forced Isaac to do the same. "It's not your fault that someone else is insane." He said, placing a kiss on Isaac's knuckles, before moving to his cheek. "Don't go blaming yourself for anything."

Isaac nodded with a blush. I was so easy to accept compliments and encouragement from Jordan. Every word he said seemed so sincere that Isaac couldn't doubt that he meant every one of them.

"And spending time with you and Sergei...getting to hold you at night, do you really think that I care about a missed date when I get to do those things? Besides, it's not the weekend, yet, we have the zoo to look forward to."

Isaac nodded with a small smile. "How'd I get so lucky as to find you of all the men in the world?"

"By being yourself, babe. I would consider it a great personal tragedy if I had missed the opportunity to kiss those lips or hold the strong man that stands before me."

Isaac still didn't believe that. If it had been so easy to date him, one would've thought that someone would have picked him up before Jordan. But the fact that he got to date Jordan more than made up for the years of loneliness that he had lived.

“Isaac, right?” Ethan, the salesman asked when they walked through the doors, and Isaac nodded, impressed that Ethan had remembered.

“Yeah.”

“What can I do for you?” He asked with a wide grin, showing no lack of enthusiasm, a trait that he seemed to share with Jordan.

“I...ran into some trouble with my phone, and I wanted to get a new one.” Isaac explained.

“That’s no problem, we can file a claim and get you a new one, even transfer your number over.”

“No!” Isaac and Jordan both said together. Ethan looked alarmed and Isaac let out a nervous chuckle. “Sorry, it’s just...”

“The old number that Isaac was using is no longer a valid option.”

Ethan nodded like he understood, but he also grimaced as though he had bad news.

“The procedure for replacing a...lost, missing, whatever phone is to transfer the old number over.”

“But we’re not replacing the phone, I’m simply getting a new one.”

“You’d have to pay full price.” Ethan warned, and for the first time in his life, Isaac was able to laugh at the cost of something. If it had been almost anything else, he would have had some humility at the reminder that he wasn’t really spending his money, but considering that the stalker had found his number, he was feeling more than a little relieved at being able to buy a new phone.

“Money is no object.”

Security was, but Isaac didn’t want to bring that up to Ethan. It wasn’t his fault that Isaac had been traced, though Jordan seemed to disagree.

“His number was stolen last time. That *cannot* happen, again.” Jordan said, placing his hand on Isaac’s shoulder in a protective gesture.

Ethan looked genuinely alarmed. “Stolen? As in...someone used has been using your number, or...did someone just get a hold of your number?”

“The second one. I’ve only had the number for a few days, and someone got a hold of it, and...” Isaac paused, but Jordan gave him an encouraging nod, and he sighed before continuing. “Someone sent me very threatening texts.”

“Did you contact the authorities?” Ethan asked in a way that suggested his training was speaking.

“I am the authorities.” Jordan said, reaching into his back pocket, and pulling out his badge.

Ethan paled and began to stammer.

“Look, officer...sir, I...I...” Ethan stammered, looking truly horrified, until Isaac stepped in to save him.

“Vydrachka, you’re scaring the guy.” Isaac whispered, knowing all too well how it felt to be frightened by a stranger. “He’s not here in an official capacity.”

“No, I’m not, but I don’t want to see the same problem crop up, again.”

Ethan took a breath before nodding. “I understand, sir, but...I’m just a salesman, I can’t even fathom how someone got his number in the first place, let alone how to prevent it from happening, again.”

It made sense then why Ethan had gotten so scared: He was frightened at seeing his company’s fault, and wasn’t knowledgeable enough to know how to solve it. While it wasn’t exactly encouraging to Isaac, he could see that getting frustrated or angry at the man wouldn’t help.

“Is there someone that we could speak to about this?” Jordan asked, his voice was still a little rough. Isaac took his hand and sent an apologetic look to Ethan before turning to his boyfriend.

“Jordan, I find this protective thing that you’re doing very attractive.” Isaac whispered. “He’s just a salesman, though. It’s not his fault that the stalker found me, so calm down, and try not scare the guy away?”

Jordan nodded. “Sorry, I just...I worry about you, babe.” He said, running a finger down the side of Isaac’s face, before turning to Ethan, who was still waiting, patiently.

“I’m sorry. I...This man means a lot to me, and I want to ensure that the same thing doesn’t happen, so let’s talk about security options.” He said with his smile. It was one that made Isaac want to melt, so he assumed at the very least, Ethan was reassured.

Notes for the Chapter:

Mne nraivitsya konfety tozhe = I like candy, too.

So, Jordan can be a little frightening when he needs to be. It was fun seeing the few people who commented guessing who it was, but I'm not going to just give that information away.

Thank you. :)

33. Part of the Pack

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac and Jordan progress the nature of their relationship with words.

Isaac

Isaac left the mall feeling better than he had going in. For one thing, Ethan had explained how the very programming of Sergei's phone prevented any strangers from being able to contact him. For another, Isaac was supplied with a new phone, at no cost to him. Ethan had found a manager able to handle the situation. The manager was shocked and disgusted at what their service had been used for, and without any prompting or pressuring from either Isaac or Jordan, had given him a complimentary phone, with the assurance that such a mishap wouldn't happen in the future.

Isaac would be more willing to believe her if he hadn't already suffered such a frightening violation of his personal space, though. As he saw it, no extraordinary measure could or had been taken, and if his stalker could find him once, he could find him, again. The only thing that Isaac could do was download an app that prevented calls or messages from numbers that he deemed unworthy, though it only worked once he had received an offensive communication from an unwanted number.

"That could have gone better, but...I suppose it could have gone worse." Jordan commented as they got into Isaac's car.

"My first concern was Sergei, if he can be protected from all of this, I don't consider it to have been a waste of time, and besides, they did all they could."

"We could get you a temporary number and rotate it every week." Jordan said, his fingers flying over his phone, and when Isaac peeked over, he saw him going through the app store to find one.

Isaac let out a chuckle and smiled at Jordan.

"You know, I don't think that I could have done this without you. I mean...more than just coming with me for the phone, having you here through all of this...it

means a lot to me.”

Jordan shook his head. “You underestimate yourself, babe. I’d never leave you to do this on your own, but in an alternate universe where I never found you, I bet that you would have been able to handle this.”

Isaac didn’t agree with that. He had had two panic attacks in a row, which told him that he was incapable of dealing with the situation on his own. He couldn’t even fathom what would have happened if he didn’t have the support group that he did. He couldn’t see being able cope with breaking down, if he hadn’t had Jordan to pull him back out, or Derek and Stiles to protect Sergei.

“I see you doubting yourself.” Jordan whispered, and despite how he was feeling, Isaac smirked. Jordan knew him well enough to see through his deeper inner turmoil, and Isaac really liked that his boyfriend was insightful enough to notice, and compassionate enough to care.

“It’s sweet of you to say, vydrachka, but you’re wrong. If he...if he had started stalking me in Chicago...” Isaac let out a sigh. “I can’t see how I would have survived.”

“I have no doubt that you would have...survived, that is, but you know what, Isaac? You’ll never have to find out, because I’m not going to leave you... Unless you ask me to.” Jordan frequently added a form of consent at the end of his sentences involving him staying with Isaac, which Isaac assumed was due to the circumstance. It didn’t matter, Isaac wasn’t about to send Jordan away anyway.

“You will always be welcome to stay with me.” He said with a smile.

“Then I’ll spend as much time with you as my job allows. Speaking of which, I have a weekend coming up.”

Isaac nodded with a grin. “Yes, and no matter who’s chasing me, I made a promise to my son, and I’m assuming that you’ll want to come with us?”

“You assumed correctly. And just because we’ll have those ferocious animals around us doesn’t mean that I’m letting Tara and Matt stay home, either.”

“Don’t they get a day off?”

Jordan nodded. “Of course, but they find that protecting you is a noble cause, and far more...” He paused, and Isaac offered:

“Exciting?”

Jordan made an apologetic face. “Yes. I mean...not that it’s positive, but it’s a big case.”

Isaac understood. His stalking was probably the most thrilling thing to happen to Beacon Hills in years, but before he could reassure Jordan, the man spoke.

“I promise that...word vomit sounded a lot better in my head. You’re not a spectacle to them, babe. They care about the safety of you and your son.”

Isaac patted his shoulder, consolingly.

“I never doubted that for a moment. I already told you, Jordan, I trust you. If you feel as though they’re up for the job, then our safety is in capable hands.”

“I really think that doing this will be good for Sergei, I’m glad that you’re still on board.” Jordan said as Isaac pulled into the driveway.

“I don’t break promises to my son unless I absolutely have to, and besides...like I said, I trust you. You’ll keep us safe.”

“Yes, I will.” Jordan said, turning Isaac’s head towards him, and placing a kiss on his lips. Though Isaac wanted to return to his son, for the moment, he was content to stay with Jordan. He shifted himself to get better access to his boyfriend’s mouth. Kissing Jordan was unlike any experience Isaac had ever had. He had a son, friends, and had lived a relatively interesting life, but there was a spark that passed between him and Jordan when they kissed that Isaac had never felt, before. It surged through his neurons and ignited strange and wonderful feelings in him. His heart thudded faster in his chest and he felt himself tremble.

Isaac parted his lips before Jordan’s tongue had even asked for permission, though he wasted no time in taking advantage of it as their kiss deepened. Tenderly, Isaac reached out and grasped the back of Jordan’s head, and pressed both of them closer together. Jordan let out a deep moan and became slightly more dominating for a moment. He shifted forward and used his own hands to

pull Isaac closer, after a moment, he pulled away, though.

“I’m sorry, I-.”

Isaac interrupted him by going back to kissing him. Isaac had no problems with Jordan taking control the way he had. To show this, he took Jordan’s hands and placed where they had been. Jordan took the hint and began to grasp at him in the same way that he had been before. With the emergency brake between them, Isaac found it hard to get as close as he wanted, but in the last coherent part of his brain, he realized that it was probably better that there was some sort of barrier. Such were his feelings for Jordan, that he might risk getting into a less than discrete activity and if their relationship was successful, he didn’t want their first sexual encounter to be in his beat up car.

That didn’t stop him from enjoying what they were doing, though. On the contrary, Isaac let out a moan of his own.

How long they stayed like that, Isaac couldn’t be sure, but when they Jordan pulled away, Isaac felt simultaneously as though he had just been filled with something crucial, and as though he was missing it at the same time.

“I really could go on doing that all night, but Sergei is probably worried about us, don’t you think?” Jordan asked, trailing a finger over Isaac’s bottom lip.

“I still find it exceptional that you worry about my son as much as you do.”

Jordan cocked his head and a smile curled his lips. “Of course I worry about him. I’m not his father, but I care about you, Isaac, and I care about Sergei just as much.”

Isaac didn’t doubt it, he *couldn’t*. Not only was he falling for Jordan, but the man was...sincere, and when he looked at Isaac, Isaac couldn’t help but feel the warmth of attraction and protection. He knew that when Jordan looked at him, he wasn’t just a piece of meat, or a weak child to be protected. Jordan truly saw him as something to be cherished, and equal with a slightly different set of talents. Isaac just had to find out what those talents were.

“Your mind is working.” Jordan whispered, the crooked smile still on his face.

“I just...every time that I stop and think about it, I’m in shock. I mean...There’s

you: A man who could have anyone. I mean...you're...you're something else, vydrachka. And then there's-."

"You: A man who deserves anything his heart beats for, which for you is the wellbeing of your son and your friends." Jordan interrupted. "You're beautiful, Isaac. That eager light in your eyes, the way that you try to hide your teeth when you smile, but they end up shining, your hair..." Jordan took a moment to run his hands through it. "The most admirable thing about you, though is your relationship with Sergei, and that you've allowed me to become a part of it. You two have such a bond, and it doesn't take a genius to tell that you guys are lone wolves, but you...you make me feel like...part of your pack." He said with a small smirk.

It was a fun metaphor, but it was also very accurate. It had been only him and Sergei for so long, but it wasn't even as though Jordan had had to force his way in, his very being made Isaac *want* to let him into their lives. If they were lone wolves, Jordan was another who was welcome to their den.

"You're...you're...Jordan, if there's one person in the world that I'd let in, it's you." Isaac whispered. "There's never been a moment in my life where I'm happier, than when I'm with you....excluding the time with my son."

"You didn't even have to say it. I know that there will always be the largest chunk of your heart devoted to Seryozha, and that's exactly how it should be. I'm not going to compete with your son for your affections. That wouldn't be right, because it's not our dynamic. I'm cherishing the time that we spend together. Like I said, you let me into your life, which I find pretty awesome."

The revelation cracked something inside of Isaac, and he let out a chuckle as he ran his hand down the face of the amazing man in front of him.

"I still don't know how I managed to get you, but..." He paused, biting his lip, but Jordan shook his head.

"Tell me?" He asked, and if there was a way for Isaac to deny those eyes, he wasn't aware of it.

"I think I'm falling in love with you." Isaac said, his eyes dropping to the ground, as he let out his feelings and a breath all in one.

Jordan just chuckled. “That’s good, because otherwise my feelings might be a little one sided.”

Isaac looked up, daring to believe it. “Are you being serious?”

“I wouldn’t lie to you, Isaac. You’re like no one that I’ve ever known, and it’s only been a few days, and...I think we need some more time, but for right now, I’m falling, and frankly, I don’t give a damn.”

“And here I was thinking that you only like nerd movies.” Isaac said, his voice hitching a little, feeling the bliss of knowing that his feelings were returned by Jordan. Jordan was falling in love with him, something that he logically knew had to happen one day, but for it to happen so soon, it was something that he couldn’t have ever even dreamed of.

“Hey, babe, don’t cry.” Jordan said, looking worried as he wiped a tear from Isaac’s eye. “If it’s too much, I can-.”

“Shut up, Jordan.” Isaac sobbed, jumping across the console to kiss him again. “How can any of you be too much?”

“I still have that new car smell, give me a few weeks, you’ll get bored of me.” Jordan said, his smile dropping a little.

“Why would you think...?” Isaac let his sentence drop as he realized why Jordan seemed so hesitant, and he felt that he was rushing things. Darren, the man whom Jordan had been dating before had cultivated similar feelings, but left him out to dry. “Jordan, you seem to be pretty devoted to me and Sergei.”

Jordan nodded.

“Well, that’s a two way street. I know you were hurt before, but...*I’m* not going to hurt you, vydrachka.”

“I know.” Jordan said, grimacing. “And it’s not that you make me feel like you will I just...I’m still a little nervous about putting my heart out there.”

“I’ll take care of it, all that I ask is the same in return.”

“You’re a treasure, Isaac, and I promise to treat you as such.” Jordan said,

pecking Isaac on the lips on last time before he sighed. “Why don’t we head inside? I bet Sergei is worried about you.”

Isaac nodded and opened the passenger side door. As he had climbed over to Jordan’s side, he was in an awkward position, but with his boyfriend’s help, he managed to get out without cracking his skull.

Sergei was indeed happy to see him. From the game room, he ran out, and threw himself into Isaac’s arms.

“Papa, ya skuchal po tebe.”

“Ya tozhe po tebe skuchala.” Isaac replied, kissing Sergei on his cheek.

Notes for the Chapter:

Papa, ya skuchal po tebe. = Papa, I missed you.

Ya tozhe po tebe skuchala = I missed you, too.

No, I cannot stop myself from mentioning wolves even in human AUs, so...live with it.

34. A Sore Spot

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan gets something off his chest as the group heads to the zoo.

Isaac

The promised zoo trip was something that Isaac found himself actually looking forward to. Despite his hesitation at the thought of his stalker harming him, he found, as he woke up on the day that had been promised to his son, that he was actually elated at the thought of going out on a date with Jordan, the fact that Stiles and Derek were joining them was just a bonus.

Jordan seemed equally excited, if for no other reason than he got to wear a Pokémon shirt, but that didn't stop him from being vigilant. He had called in Matt, Tara, and two more officers to shadow them while they were there. Jordan had assured Isaac that it would not affect their day, but more importantly, neither would the stalker. Isaac hadn't needed his assurances, though. He had reached the point that he trusted Jordan implicitly. If Jordan said they would be safe, he believed him.

"I want to see the penguins and the tigers, and the lions, and the monkeys." Sergei announced, bouncing on the bed when Isaac came out of the shower. He didn't mind, it felt good to see his son behaving in such an exuberant manner. If nothing else, at least he could rest assured that Sergei hadn't been too negatively affected by the tumultuous events in their lives.

"You're going to see all those things and more." Isaac shouted from the bathroom while he toweled off his hair.

"Can I have a monkey, papa?"

Isaac let out a snort. "You absolutely may not." He said with as light of a tone as he could, though he swore he could still hear the sound of Sergei's happiness crashing. "It's not that I don't want to make you happy son, because you know that I hate denying you anything. It's just...the zoo paid a lot for money for the monkeys, and they don't like to sell them."

The sounds of the springs protesting began again and Isaac let out the same sigh that he did every time he had averted breaking his son's heart, even slightly.

"Okay, papa, but can I have a stuffed monkey?"

"As long as it's nothing living, you can have anything you want, kiddo." Jordan's voice drifted through the door, and Isaac felt the familiar warm tingle spread through his spine. There was something about Jordan that just made him feel content. He couldn't explain it in any other way than he was falling in love, and perhaps a bit harder than he thought as he gazed into the mirror and saw a goofy grin across his face.

That Jordan had offered to buy his son something, a topic which had always been contentious for him, and that it didn't even make a blip on his radar made Isaac comfortable in his realization. He trusted Jordan to do what was best for his son.

Isaac pulled on some boxers before leaving the bathroom, only to find Sergei pulling on one of Jordan's arms.

"Come on, Mr. Parrish, jump with me."

"I don't know if my bed can handle me, kiddo, and we have to get going soon. Why don't you go and check to see if your uncles are ready?" Isaac asked.

Sergei abandoned his task to do as Isaac asked, with the same amount of enthusiasm. When he had left, a small frown crossed Jordan's features.

Part of his feelings for the man told him that Jordan probably wasn't having second thoughts, but he still mentioned it, anyway.

"Is...I mean, he's a kid, he likes to jump on beds." Isaac said with a nervous chuckle.

"Hmm?" Jordan looked up, and his smile returned. "Oh, it's not that, babe. I've been known to jump on a bed in my day, but...I mean, he doesn't hate me, does he?"

Isaac's brain immediately went through his memories, trying to pinpoint a moment when Sergei had shown an overt displeasure for Jordan. None came to

mine, especially not from the events which had just transpired.

“Uh...No? Did he say something?”

“No, he’s a sweet kid, I just...it’s stupid.” Jordan said, shaking his head, but Isaac wanted to know. If there was a problem, he wanted to stick a pin in it right away, lest the negative feelings festered.

“No, tell me, vydrachka. If he’s done something, I should know, so I can talk to him about it.”

Jordan sighed. “You’re going to think that I’m acting like a baby.” He said, but when Isaac just looked at him expectantly, he continued. “He calls Stiles and Derek dyadya, but he still calls me Mr. Parrish. I mean...he can call me whatever he wants, but...there’s still a barrier there, I think.”

When Isaac thought about it, he did find it a little strange, though he was sure that the real answer wasn’t cruel.

“I think...He’s young, but he still realizes that our relationship is different from my relationship with Stiles and Derek. If he called you ‘dyadya’, that would imply that you and I are brothers, but he knows that brothers don’t share beds, so that leaves him with giving you no special name, or calling you by a paternal noun, and...he’s not ready for that.”

A look of realization crossed Jordan’s face, before he blushed in embarrassment.

“Oh...that...makes more sense.” He said, slowly. “I...uh...think I’m going to go and melt into a puddle.” Jordan said with a nervous chuckle.

“No puddle melting.” Isaac said, resting a hand on Jordan’s shoulder. “You want to be a part of this family, and you were worried about Sergei accepting you.” Isaac understood, and he didn’t find it strange or childish at all, though it was a little cute, and the fact that he was wearing a shirt with a chibi Megaman on it did nothing to deaden that.

“I was...I mean...I want to stay on his best terms, but it’s more than that. He deserves to be happy, just like you, and if I’m not making him happy, then I’d like to know.”

“He doesn’t hate you.” Isaac said. “He knows that you’re important to me, and he likes you because...you’re you. I’ve yet to see anything that could make my son dislike you. You keep his father safe, and after the life that we’ve led, I don’t think that you could endear yourself to him in any other way.”

Jordan’s grin returned, and he pecked Isaac on the cheek, before letting him finish getting dressed.

It was refreshing to have a discussion about something more or less normal. Granted, in a ‘normal’ relationship, the conversation probably would have come after a few months, but they weren’t discussing the stalker, they were having a conversation about Jordan’s role in Sergei’s life, which was exactly the type of thing that Isaac should have been focusing on.

#

The day was perfect; the sun was shining, the animals were making their various calls, but perhaps the best part was that there had been no notes from the stalker as they left, no sign of his presence, and as they entered, Isaac allowed himself to believe that he was merely enjoying a great day with his friends, son, and boyfriend.

Without being told and despite his excitement, Sergei clung to Isaac’s side as they entered the park. Isaac managed to reach his wallet before Stiles when it came to paying for their tickets, feeling obligated to do so, even though some part of him still viewed it as Stiles’ money. It allowed him to feel more comfortable when Jordan pulled out his daily bag of Skittles for Sergei.

“How did you...?” Isaac began, but Jordan just winked.

“I’m full of surprises, babe.” He said, simply.

“Thank you, Mr. Parrish.”

“Dobro pozhalovat', kiddo.” Jordan said, introducing the second surprise. Somehow, even with spending all of his time with Isaac, Jordan had managed to learn a new Russian phrase.

“Surprises indeed.” Isaac said with a smirk.

“And every time, that smile...makes it more than worth it, babe.”

The words brought a furious flare up to Isaac’s blush, and he was sure that he was matching the flamingos that they were passing.

“Mr. Parrish, why do they stand on only one leg?”

The question shocked all four of the adults into stopping. It wasn’t the nature of the question, Sergei was a bright and curious boy, but it was the fact that he had asked Jordan, and not Isaac.

“I...uh...I’m not sure, but I think that it has something to do with it being easier to pump blood through their body.” Jordan said, staring at Sergei with an odd smile that spoke of his shock.

Sergei, of course, wouldn’t have said anything about it, but Isaac took it as yet another sign that Sergei was becoming more comfortable with a life that included Jordan.

“Uh...you know, kiddo, you can call me Jordan, if you like.” Jordan offered, tentatively.

This time, Sergei turned to Isaac for permission. If Jordan was willing, then Isaac couldn’t see any problem. In fact, he was proud that Sergei had maintained the respectful tone with Jordan for so long.

“If Jordan says that it’s alright, then I’m not going to stop you.”

“But...Jordan...” Sergei tried the word out, “standing on one leg doesn’t make me feel better.” Sergei attempted to demonstrate by standing on his left foot, but falling over, right away. Isaac’s protective streak flared up as he rushed forward, but Sergei was laughing.

“See, it doesn’t help.”

“Well, you’re both different.” Jordan said. “Just because it works for him doesn’t mean that it will work for you.”

“That’s not very fair.” Sergei said, trying again.

“No, it’s not.” Jordan said, getting more comfortable. “When I was kid, I wanted to swim like the fish, and I didn’t think that it was fair that they got gills and I didn’t.”

“Gills let them breath under water?”

Jordan nodded. “Yep, and I wanted to breath underwater, too, but do you know what my mother told me?”

Sergei shook his head, though his eyes were wide open, and he was hanging on to every word.

“She told me that God made me the way he did for a reason, and if I took gills, I’d have to lose out on something else. Flamingos and fish don’t have any connections to their parents, they don’t have friends or go to school.”

“That’s a sad life.” Sergei said, turning his eyes back to the birds. “So...they don’t love their papas?”

“They don’t...they don’t have the capacity for that, kiddo.” Jordan said, and unable to Sergei’s, he seemed to bumble along a bit. “But...uh, they’re happy, anyway, being birds...fish...crocodiles, they like it.”

He was a little nervous, but he was doing alright. Isaac was perfectly willing to let him continue to try and explain his way out of the tangled mess he had gotten himself into, but Sergei just made a face and ran into Isaac’s leg.

“I don’t think I like flamingos, papa, I’d rather have you.”

“Well, that’s just dandy, because I’d rather have you than be a flamingo.”

Sergei beamed at him before thanking Jordan for explaining, before moving a few feet away to read the sign about the birds. Jordan turned to him with a worried expression.

“Could I be any more spastic? I think I alienated him.”

“No, it was good, vydrachka.” Isaac whispered. “You answered his questions and got him thinking, which is awesome, but most importantly, you tried.”

“Well...it’s him, besides, it was his first time really engaging me, and I didn’t want to blow it.”

Isaac wasn’t sure how to explain how much that meant to him. Jordan didn’t have to make the effort. Sergei was a kid, Jordan could have come up with some off hand reason why flamingos stood on one leg, but he had applied himself, and made an effort, and it only drew Isaac down deeper.

“Papa, zoopark bol'she, chem prosto flamingo, let’s keep going.” Sergei said, pulling on Isaac’s hand, and ripping him from his thoughts.

“Da, kiddo, there’s more to be seen.” Jordan said, causing Stiles to raise an eyebrow.

“You got that?” He asked.

“No, but...zoopark...flamingo...let’s move on, I figured it out.” Jordan said with a laugh.

“Yesli ya ne byl uzhe zhenat...” Stiles said with a sigh and a wink.

“Pozvol'te mne imet' printsa?” Isaac asked, desperately considering Jordan to be his knight in shining armor.

“V sluchaye yesli vy ne zametili, chto on tvoy. Ya ne mog vzyat' yego, dazhe yesli by zakhotel.”

“On.” Isaac corrected, absentmindedly, but smiling at the same time. It wasn’t as though Stiles would have taken Jordan, but to hear from an outside observer how smitten the man was...it felt good.

“Okay, so, I may have just wowed you all with my ability to pick up words the sound like English from what Sergei said, but...now you’ve lost me.” Jordan said, looking between the two of them.

Derek laughed. “Jon the club.”

“Sorry. I was...oh, God, I’m rude, aren’t I?” Isaac asked, feeling a little guilty.

Jordan smiled and shook his head, but Sergei spoke first.

“It was secret, because papa called you his prince.”

Isaac’s heart dropped and he opened his mouth to try and...lie, but Jordan’s smile widened.

“I’m your prince?” He asked blushing slightly.

“Well...I kind of...I mean...my people’s aversion to royalty aside...yeah.” Isaac was surprised that he managed to get the sentence out, but the result was worth it. Jordan let out a breathy chuckle and managed to grin even wider.

“Well...that’s...thanks, babe. I...really like the idea of being your prince, but...if you don’t mind, I’m still going to consider you mine.”

The cheese factor of their relationship was certainly nothing to be scoffed at, but Isaac couldn’t fucking help but giggle as his gut exploded in butterflies.

“Papa...” Sergei whined, and Isaac nodded.

“Alright, kiddo.” He said, following his son, but taking Jordan’s hand.

Notes for the Chapter:

Dobro pozhalovat = You're welcome

Papa, zoopark bol'she, chem prosto flamingo = Dad, the zoo is more than just flamingos.

Yesli ya ne byl uzhe zhenat... = If I wasn't already married...

Pozvol'te mne imet' printsa = Let me have a prince?

V sluchaye yesli vy ne zametili, chto on tvoy. Ya ne mog vzyat' yego, dazhe yesli by zakhotel. = In case you haven't notice, he's yours, I couldn't take him even if I wanted to.

This was fun, this fic cannot be all doom and gloom and creeps, so I have cute chapters.

35. New Opportunities.

Summary for the Chapter:

The day at the zoo continues and the dean has a prospect for Isaac.

Isaac

The zoo had a small duck pond and around it was a grassy area where the five of them had lunch. Sergei concocted a brilliant scheme to lure the ducks next to them by leaving a trail from the water to their spot.

“You’re an astute boy, kiddo.” Jordan remarked while Sergei sat next to Isaac, feeding the ducks that had followed his trail.

“What does that mean, papa?”

“Uh...umnyy.” Isaac responded. Teaching Sergei new English words through Russian had always been his way.

“Thank you, Mr...Jordan.” Sergei said.

“Well, it’s true. When I was your age, I used to chase pigeons, if I had thought about leaving a trail...at least two of my summers would have been a lot more interesting.”

Isaac chuckled at the thought of a tiny Jordan (which he pictured as an adult Jordan’s head on a tiny body) running through the woods chasing the unremarkable birds.

“Alright!” Stiles said, clapping his hands together. “Who’s ready to go and see the sea lions?”

“As long as we stop by the wolves after, I’m game.” Jordan said, while Derek blushed and whispered:

“I want to see the lions.”

Stopping in the park had given everyone an opportunity to reveal their favorite

animals, and when everyone turned to him expectantly, Isaac smiled.

“Polar bears, but this is really Sergei’s day, he should get first choice.”

Sergei looked conflicted as though he was unsure of who he should please with his response. He threw the rest of his bread to the ducks and put his hand on his hips.

“The nosorog...” He said, before pausing and biting his lip. “Papa, what’s nosorog in English?” he whispered, and Isaac lowered his head.

“Rhinoceros.”

Sergei practiced the words under his breath a few times before trying it out. “Rinerous...rhinoceros.”

“Then that’s our next stop. Come on, kiddo.” Jordan said, turning towards the African mammal’s exhibit, but stopping at Sergei’s sudden question.

“Can I have a piggyback ride?”

“Uh...sure.” Jordan said, sounding a little confused.

“Give him a moment, Sergei.” Isaac said, pulling Jordan ahead, but keeping an eye on his son, knowing exactly why he had asked Jordan for the lift.

“I used to give him piggyback rides all the time, and then...the money thing became so bad that...” Isaac let out a breathy chuckle to cover the sudden tightness in his throat. “I was too weak and busy to carry my son. I had to tell him that he was getting too big. You have more muscles.”

“Isaac, if you don’t want me to-.”

“No, it’s alright. I told you, it’s all for that smile. If he can be happy, then it’s a good day.”

Jordan nodded and motioned for Sergei to hop up onto his back. They turned to head towards the area that Sergei wanted to go to, but Isaac’s eyes, completely by chance fell upon the pond, and he was frozen.

Isaac couldn't help but see the family picture that they created: The two uncles, Stiles and Derek, protective and watchful; Isaac, the man who had raised Sergei, and gotten him this far; and Jordan, the man who Isaac was falling in love with, the man that could be an excellent father figure to Jordan, if that was what he wanted.

"You alright, babe?"

Isaac moved his eyes until they met Jordan's in the reflection, and when his boyfriend smiled, Isaac believed for a second that it was because Jordan was seeing the same thing he was. Even if it probably wasn't, Jordan was at the very least smiling at *him*, even with Sergei pulling on his ears to try and direct him.

"Ears aren't reigns, Seryozha." Isaac chided, but Jordan just laughed.

"The kid's just eager to get going, aren't you?" Sergei nodded and Jordan lowered his voice. "He's not hurting me, babe, I'll tell him to stop if he does."

Isaac nodded and took one last look at the image of the reflected happiness before turning and following Jordan to see more animals.

#

"See, I've just always found them so majestic." Jordan said, looking out at the wolves, indeed, sounding a little awed. Isaac had to admit that they did look rather impressive, strutting about their cage, except for the one that was lying near the back, nearly hidden by a pine tree.

"This one is sick." Isaac said, pointing her out.

Sergei's face fell as he looked it, and he turned to Isaac.

"Papa, what's wrong with him?"

"It's a 'she' and she's not sick, she's nursing." Jordan said, not looking at the cage, but at a sign next to it. Isaac's eyes scanned the sign and he quickly understood.

Beacon Hills Biological Park is proud to announce the birth of six new pups to our resident female. Wolf cubs require specific nutrition and we ask that visitors

do not feed the animals.

“Papa, what’s ‘nursing’ mean?”

“Uh...well...mothers...” Isaac sighed and squirmed a little. “Well, mothers have babies, you know that.”

Sergei nodded, and the other three watched with smirks of slight amusement.

“So, when they give birth, they also...make milk.”

Sergei’s face scrunched up in confusion. “Milk?” He asked. “Where does it come from?”

Isaac let out another sigh and pinched the bridge of his nose, begging God to save him from having to explain too much to his son.

“From...their sis’ki.” He whispered, solidly mortified despite the fact that it was simple childhood curiosity.

“Wolves and people moms?” Sergei asked, skeptically, blissfully unaware of Isaac’s embarrassment.

“All mammals...which...means...a lot of animals do it.”

Sergei turned back to the cage and looked at the wolf that was laying down, no doubt trying to catch a glimpse of the marvelous milk, while Isaac groaned and turned to the snickering group.

“That was cruel and mean and I hate you all.” He huffed, though with a smile of his own. If the most embarrassing part of his day was over, he could live with his son having new knowledge.

“Oh, it was adorable.” Stiles said. “I can’t wait until he’s old enough for that other talk.”

“I can.” Isaac said quickly. “I can wait ages...eons even.”

“Compared to some other recent events, I’d think that a sex talk would be...easy.” Derek said.

“Maybe.” Isaac said with a slight chuckle. Life as a parent wasn’t always black and white. And while Isaac’s greatest present fear was the loss of his son to the stalker, the deeper fear within him was one of losing his son one day to time. Sergei couldn’t be a child forever, and one day, he would leave to start his own family...and Isaac would be alone.

Or perhaps not. As though sensing his dark thoughts, Jordan came closer and took his hand, offering his silent protection and comfort.

“Papa, what’s this word?” Sergei asked, ever the curious boy, and Isaac walked over to help him. He had been looking at the sign detailing the lives of wolves and was pointing out the one that had stopped him.

“Dominance, it’s...gospodstvo?” He tried, knowing the right word, but unsure if Sergei would understand it. Sure enough, Sergei’s eyes did darken in confusion, causing Isaac to think of another way to explain. “V dannom sluchaye eto oznachayet liderstvo.”

“It says: *The alpha wolf shows its dom...dominance over the other wolves in a variety of ways.* Does that mean the alpha is the boss?”

“That’s right, kiddo.” Jordan said with a smile, even if he hadn’t been the original target of the question.

“Stiles, is that you?” At the sound of a different voice in such a public place, Isaac felt his fatherly instincts snarl.

The stranger was a thin man with long hair that fell into his face. He was extremely pale and that combined with the streaks of gray in his hair gave the impression that he was older than he probably was. However it was his paleness that sparked his identity in Isaac’s mind. He hadn’t recognized the man without his glasses, and Stiles’ words only confirmed that it was Adrian Harris

“Dean Harris, how are you, today?”

Knowing that it was his old biology teacher didn’t exactly make him feel a hundred percent more comfortable, though, he still pulled Sergei behind him in a protective gesture.

Adrian seemed to notice, but he didn’t say anything about it.

“I’m alright, Stiles. I came with my wife and son, and I told you that outside of school, you don’t have to call me ‘Dean Harris.’”

Stiles shrugged. “It’s the least that I can do after making your life a living hell.”

“Good times.” Adrian said, nodding. “And speaking of the past, Isaac how are you doing? Stiles told me that you had come back to town.”

“I’m alright, thank you, and thank you for considering my application.” Isaac said, knowing that even if he didn’t feel very safe, he still needed to be on his best behavior for who might become his new boss.

“Oh, it’s no trouble at all. When Stiles told me what had happened to you...it was the least I could do to help.”

Isaac blushed in embarrassment. He knew that it had probably been necessary for Stiles to explain the more intimate details of Isaac’s life, but that didn’t make him feel too much better about it.

“Papa, kto eto?” Sergei asked, his own natural fears being enough to make him guarded as he hid behind Isaac.

“On byl moim uchitelem, kogda ya byl molozhe.” Isaac replied, choosing Sergei’s comfort language while Stiles introduced Jordan.

“On plokhoy chelovek?”

“Nyet, no nakhodit'sya ryadom so mnoy, khorosho?” Sergei nodded while Adrian looked at them curiously.

Before Isaac could even feel uncomfortable about it, his old teacher spoke.

“I’m sorry, but, is that Russian?”

“Uh...yeah.”

“Stiles, you didn’t mention that your friend speaks Russian.”

“I...uh...No, I guess I didn’t, but...” Stiles chuckled nervously. “That’s not a problem is it?”

“Well, not really, but you had to convince me to take on a philosophy class. Russian, on the other hand...not a class that needs convincing. Kids always want to learn the major languages, and do you know how many Russian speakers there are in Beacon Hills? Hint: None.”

“Well, technically, there’s three...maybe four.” Jordan said, ruffling Sergei’s hair. “But I see your point.” It took Isaac a moment to notice, but Jordan had used the gesture to pull Sergei back towards himself.

“I’d still like to see an application, but it would just be a formality if you’d agree to teach Russian at my university.”

Isaac felt suddenly put on the spot, and when he spoke his deficient articulation became crippling.

“I...uh...that’s...” He sputtered while simultaneously trying to keep Sergei soothed. “I mean...that’s-.”

“Want to get a sentence out there, buddy?” Stiles asked and Derek sighed.

“Rude, much?” He asked, but the pause had given Isaac the footing he needed.

“I’m...I hadn’t considered that, but I’m not...I mean, I’m not a Russian expert.” Isaac said, his trademarked lack in self-confidence deciding to show its colors. It was the wrong thing to say, though, because immediately, the entire group, even Sergei contradicted him.

“You taught me, papa.”

“You know more Russian than I do, man.”

“I’ve never heard you slip up, babe.”

“I think you could teach the people here one or two things.”

Adrian chuckled. “It would seem as though your friends and your son disagree. I wouldn’t need you to be perfect, just beginner and intermediate level, if we get to the advanced level, we can discuss more options.”

“Alright.” Isaac said with a smile. It was better than he could have imagined.

Even though he was less than confident about his ability to teach Russian at a professional level, Russian was second nature to him, he had learned it so early, and used it so often with Sergei that he knew he could at least give students the basics.

“Thank you.” Isaac added. “I...” He let out a snort. “Philosophy wasn’t very helpful, but Russian has been, and...thank you.” Isaac wasn’t moved enough to cry, but it was a close thing. He had enjoyed learning and teaching Russian, and it was something that he could enjoy doing, again.

“My pleasure, Mr. Lahey.” Adrian said, smiling. “I’ll let you all get on with your day, your son doesn’t seem to like me.”

Sergei was indeed still hiding and glaring at Adrian, and Isaac opened his mouth to give him a light chastisement, and tell him that Adrian could be trusted, but Adrian spoke first.

“It’s alright. Like I said, Stiles told me about what happened. When you turn in your application, we can talk more, for now, I’ll leave you all with the hope for a good day.”

Adrian left with a smile, leaving a flabbergasted Isaac in his wake.

“So...talk about awesome.” Stiles said, clapping his hands in excitement, and looking dangerously liable to begin a victory dance.

“Papa, what’s awesome?”

“I’m going to teach Russian at the university, just like I taught you.”

“And that will be your job?”

Isaac nodded. “And I’ll have fun doing it.”

“So, you’ll be happy?”

“Ah, Seryozha, I have you, your dyadi, and...Jordan,” Isaac took a moment to look up and smile at him, earning a wink in return, “I’m already very happy, but this will certainly make me happier.”

“Good, I like you happy, papa, you deserve it.”

“You really do, babe.” Jordan added.

Notes for the Chapter:

umnyy = Astute.

sis'ki = Boobs

V dannom sluchaye eto oznachayet liderstvo = In this case, it means leadership.

Papa, kto eto = Papa, who is this?

On byl moim uchitelem, kogda ya byl molozhe = He was my teacher when I was younger.

On plokhoy chelovek = Is he a bad man?

Nyet, no nakhodit'sya ryadom so mnoy, khorosho = No, but stay close to me, okay?

Okay, so I'm not making promises, but mayhaps chapters more often. I'm out of school for a little while so I have some free time. All I did yesterday was type, but I can't promise that everyday, so, we'll see how it goes.

Keep in touch, guys? I'm loving the speculation and keeping you on your toes.

36. Hunting

Summary for the Chapter:

The stalker leaves another gift.

Isaac

“So, good day?” Jordan asked, flopping himself backwards onto Isaac’s bed, his muscles rippled under his shirt, giving Isaac a more than pleasurable squirm in his groin. It was only natural that the man he was falling for was sexually attractive, but Isaac had been so long without sex, that he could manage his desires.

“Perfect day.” Isaac said in response to Jordan’s question. “No stalker, none of the animals were hiding out, I got to spend the day with my son, boyfriend, and best friends, and got a better job offer than the one I had before.”

“That was certainly a surprise.” Jordan said, nodding, before flailing in a way that Stiles would be proud of. “I mean...not that you got the job, but that Adrian was there.”

Isaac chuckled, not having taken offense at Jordan’s words, and nodded.

“Well, if Sergei hadn’t been so nervous...And by the way, thank you, vydrachka.”

Jordan cocked his head. “For the stuffed monkeys? I told you, babe, if I make a promise to the kid, I’m going to keep it.”

“No, not that. It’s...I saw what you did...with Sergei. He was scared and you moved to protect him in such a way that he wouldn’t have noticed.”

Jordan snorted and shook his head. “You don’t have to thank me for protecting your son, Isaac. I told you that he’s important to me. Looking after him is second nature at this point...you, too.”

The words made Isaac smile and his throat tighten a little. He knew the feeling that Jordan had described all too well. It was the feeling of a parent. When a

child's safety became so important that it was instinct, something you did without thinking...it was a level of guardianship that Isaac had only seen in other parents, and for it, he was very grateful.

"Jordan, that's...far more than I ever expected."

"You're falling in love with me, I'm falling in love with you, is it really so odd that I want to protect your son?"

Isaac shook his head and wiped his eyes as the first sob shook his breath. "No, but it's...Jordan...Every day, I see how you are with us, the way that you fit in, the things you do, and it's all just...so...thank you." By the end, Isaac had tears streaming down his face. There was still shock over how Jordan treated him, how well Jordan behaved with Sergei, and it was too amazing. Even with a stalker, Isaac still felt like the luckiest man in the world.

"Babe, don't cry." Jordan whispered, getting up, and taking Isaac into his arms. "I didn't mean to make you sad."

"Not sad." Isaac said with a watery chuckle. "I'm...the only time that I've been happier was the day that Sergei was born, and I took him into my arms."

"Well, I would never try to compete with the memory of you holding him for the first time."

That elicited another sob from Isaac. "See, that's the kind of thing that I'm talking about. You...you treat him like...the crown prince of the world."

"That's because he kind of is." Jordan said, as though it was the most obvious thing in the world. "Isaac, you raised an amazing son, and I'm not in a relationship with any other fathers. He's the most important kid in the world to me. Besides, I could see him taking over the world just by wrapping it around his finger." He added with a chuckle that vibrated his chest.

"There's just...for a long time, it was only us, we were alone, facing the world together, and my brain is still wired in that mode. I know that it wasn't the most tragic thing to have happened, but what Dylan did only cemented that. And then you come along and throw that entire system into doubt, and that's a good thing, but sometimes, it catches me by surprise."

“Well, I don’t want it to be surprising for you, babe. I want you to know that you can count on me.” With Jordan’s arms wrapped securely around him, it wasn’t hard for Isaac to believe that Jordan would always be there for him.

“I do know that, but-.”

“Papa!” Sergei’s voice made Isaac jump, the tone of his voice sounded scared, and it was something that Jordan had apparently detected as well. He moved to the bedside table where he kept his gun while Isaac made for the kitchen to get Derek’s, but Sergei’s voice came down the hallway, again. Isaac was prepared to do whatever it took to defend his son, but that didn’t stop his heart from plunging into his gut. His greatest fear was-

“Dyadya Derek is chasing me! He’s trying to steal me monkey! Help me, papa!” His voice was joined by a squeal of laughter, and for the briefest moment, Isaac was irritated with his son. It wasn’t his fault, he didn’t know that Isaac and Jordan were expecting for there to actually be an emergency, but it took several seconds before Isaac’s thundering heart could calm down. As he did, a new anger took over. The sound of his son playing shouldn’t cause him to be afraid, but that was what the stalker had done to him.

“Sorry.” He whispered to Jordan, who let out a sigh.

“It’s alright, babe. He’s...as long as he’s safe, but...dam, the kid’s got a set of lungs on him.” Jordan said with a chuckle, putting his gun away, and locking the bedside table.

“You’re...you’re not mad?”

“Not at Sergei. He’s a kid, he’s having fun, and I overreacted.”

“I’m right there with you, vydrachka. Where do you think I was heading? It wasn’t to go and hug whoever was chasing him. Derek’s gun is in the kitchen.”

“Papa!” It was Sergei who sounded worried, this time. He came running into the room, which made Isaac thoroughly grateful that Jordan had stashed his gun away.

“Papa, what’s wrong? I was calling you.”

“I’m sorry, Seryozha, we were talking.”

“Yes, papa.” Sergei said, his voice taking on a serious tone that Isaac attributed to the recent influx of snarky television into their lives. “And while you were talking, dyadya Derek stole my monkey, and he won’t give it back.”

“Well, I suppose that makes me a terrible father, how can I make it up to you?” Isaac said with a chuckle.

“You have to mount an attack against the bearded uncle and take it back.”

“Speaking of bearded uncles, he hasn’t been letting you watch Game of Thrones, has he?”

Sergei cocked his head. “What’s the game of thrones? I want to play.”

“It’s a T.V. show that is not for children.”

“But stuffed monkeys are for children and dyadya Derek had mine!” Sergei said, returning the conversation back onto its original track.

“Alright, I’m going to go and save your monkey, but Derek is a formidable enemy, I might need some help.” He said, turning his eyes to Jordan who grinned.

“I could help.” He said.

“I hear you all scheming in there, but you forget that I have Stiles on my side, and he’s the cleverest person in town.”

“My papa and Jordan are three times cleverest than dyadya Stiles!”

“Three times more clever or cleverer.” Isaac corrected, and Sergei turned to him with a glare that told Isaac that right then wasn’t the time for English lessons.

“Ooo, we’re shaking in our boots.” Stiles called back, and even though he wasn’t exactly sure how he got sucked into a play war over a stuffed animal, he was having fun, and felt a lot less embarrassing with Jordan joining in.

#

The ‘war’ had lasted longer than Isaac thought was possible considering the main object was a plush monkey. It had mainly been due to Stiles’ willingness to use the spray attachment on the sink, adding a fun, new element to the fight. They all ended up soaking wet, and laying in a panting heap on the kitchen floor, which desperately needed to be squeegeed.

Sergei had won, though. He lay next to Isaac, clutching his toy with a content smile on his face.

“So, I have a plan.” Stiles said, breathlessly. “Isaac, Jordan, Sergei, and I will go get dried off, and Derek, you can stay here and mop up the kitchen.”

“That’s just mean and uncalled for.” Derek said with a glare. “Come on, Stiles, if we work together, we can-.”

Derek was interrupted by the doorbell ringing, the sound reverberating in the silence that followed. Though Isaac, Stiles, and Derek all got up to answer it, Jordan was faster. He turned very professional as he moved to the door and looked out the spyhole.

“It’s just Tara.” He said, sounding relieved as he opened the door, though whatever was behind it, made him freeze.

“Sergei, why don’t you go and play some Smash Bros. with Derek and Stiles?” Isaac said, knowing that whatever Tara had with her was something that his son could absolutely not see.

“Who’s at the door?” he asked, instead.

“A friend of mine from work, kiddo.” Jordan replied, his voice a little darker than usual, and it was perhaps that that made Sergei head to the game room with Stiles without further argument.

Isaac used the counter for leverage and support to prevent himself from slipping as he cautiously approached the front door, noticing a grim looking Tara, which didn’t boost his prospects for what he would find.

“Babe, you don’t have to-.” Jordan began, but Isaac shook his head, the last thing he would accept would be a complete surrender to his fear.

Tara held a box in her hands. On it, written in thick, black marker were the words:

For Isaac and my son.

The reference of possessive claim to *Isaac's* son was, without a doubt, the single most infuriating thing he had experienced in regards to the stalker, in regards to anything. Sergei was *his*, and while he might be willing to share the affections of his son with Jordan, Stiles, and Derek, the stalker would never enjoy that same privilege.

"How did he manage to bring this here?" Isaac asked, the anger in his voice hopefully present despite its muted volume. "I thought that you were supposed to be watching the house."

"I'm equally as curious." Jordan added, crossing his arms, a glare forming in his eyes.

"He didn't bring it to the house. We've been watching, Deputy Parrish and... Mister Isaac. He left it outside of Matt's car."

"I don't see how that makes it more acceptable!" Jordan snarled. "You are supposed to be the first line of defense between that asshole and Isaac, if he can get anything to him, then we might as well just send you home!"

Tara's eyes fell and Isaac felt his anger beginning to break to give way to sympathy. He didn't believe that she or Matt would have done anything to harm him or his son on purpose.

"I'm sorry, sir."

Jordan opened his mouth, no doubt to berate her a little more, but Isaac spoke over him, placing a hand on his shoulder to help calm him down a little.

"What's in it?"

"It's...macabre, but not dangerous. I only brought it so you were aware, I'll bring it back to the station when my patrol shift changes."

Tara opened a flap from the box, causing Jordan and Isaac to both wince from

the scent that assaulted them. The box smelled of death and decay, and when Isaac looked inside, there was little reason to wonder why. The inside of the box was full of rose petals, two stuffed bears, and the headless bodies of several alligator lizards. The sight was shocking, but not for the reason that Jordan was grimacing in disgust.

“He knows me.” Isaac whispered, his fear returning in the face of the conclusion that he had drawn.

“Babe, what do you mean?”

“I...” Isaac paused, staring with horror at the contents of the box, not snapping out of it until Jordan reached out and closed it.

“I used to play with these, when I was little.” He continued, the pressures of a new panic attack beginning to encroach on his mind. The only thing that kept him sane and grounded was Jordan’s presence beside him, his comforting hand, his even breathing.

“Stuffed animals? Everyone does, babe.”

“No...the lizards. My father wouldn’t let me have a pet, so I would catch alligator lizards and hide them in my room. That’s...I mean, except for the people that I grew up with, no one should know that about me.”

Jordan’s eyes turned calculating, while Tara responded.

“It could just be a coincidence.” She said. “Though, I’d hate to rule anything out.”

“Coincidence or not, this is a step up, and could be considered a threat.” Jordan said. “I hate to do this to Sergei, but, I need to talk to John, and I think you should to. If you’re right, this could narrow the search.”

“Then he needs to come here. Sergei probably already suspects something and-.”

“Of course, babe.” Jordan said, taking his hand. “Whatever makes you comfortable. You don’t have to explain yourself.”

Notes for the Chapter:

No Russian this time, but I hardly think that you'll mind considering the creepfest I just laid before you.
Muwahahahahaha!

37. Yearbook

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac and John discuss more possibilities as to who the stalker might be.

Isaac

In a scene that was quickly becoming routine, Isaac and Jordan sat across from John, while the raucous sounds of video games came from the game room. Stiles and Derek took on the role of head distractors while Isaac filled John in on the latest from the stalker.

“How many people knew about your...pet lizards?”

Isaac shrugged. “My mom. She could keep a secret like no one else. Some friends at school...”

“Who exactly?” John pressed and Isaac let out an irritated sigh.

“I don’t know, dyadya! It was an innocuous detail of my childhood. I also can’t tell you what I ate for lunch on my tenth birthday!”

“Isaac, I know that you’re frustrated, but I need you to concentrate. If you’re right about this not being a coincidence, then who you told could help us figure out who it is.”

“Or the time.”

Isaac turned to him with wide eyes. “If I can’t remember who, how am I supposed to remember the time?” He asked.

“No, you misunderstood me. Not the exact time, but can you remember how old you were?”

“Oh.” That was a different prospect altogether. “I was in third grade.”

“Are you sure?”

Isaac nodded, grimly. “Yes. It was the summer bore my mother passed.” He whispered.

“So...Does Stiles have a yearbook for that year?” Jordan asked.

“I’m sure we can find one.” John said, waving his hand. “Anyone else?”

“Just Danny. At least...I’m assuming. We talked about a lot.”

“Danny, your ex?” Jordan asked, his eyes narrowing. Isaac could imagine what Jordan was thinking, and he shook his head.

“This can’t be Danny.” Isaac said, shaking his head. “Danny’s...He wouldn’t hurt me, he was-.”

“We can’t discount him, moy plemyanik.” John said, softly. “We can’t discount anyone.”

Isaac wasn’t sure if he was ready to point the finger at his ex, but he knew that he wasn’t wary of everyone. He knew, without a doubt that Jordan would never hurt him. He trusted Jordan beyond the shadow of a doubt. He also trusted Stiles and Derek, and felt that in order for John to stalk him, time-space itself would need to be torn.

“Except that we can.” Isaac whispered. “I trust Jordan, Stiles, Derek, and you. If I didn’t...” He took Jordan’s hand, “I’d have to leave.”

“Trusting us is different from trusting an ex that you haven’t spoken to in years.” John argued. “Isaac, you have to see that.”

“I can...it’s just...hard to think that...” Isaac couldn’t finish his sentence. He felt paranoid, but that was the least of his problems. It could have been Ethan, the nice man from the phone store, it could have been Dylan, or the man who had rang him up at the grocery store, Frank...Isaac had known that the stalker was out there, somewhere, watching him, and planning what to do next, but the world felt cold and dangerous when Isaac stopped to consider that any one of the smiling faces that he saw on any given day could have been the one following him and threatening his son.

“How am I...I can’t...” Isaac gasped, trying to draw in breath, but he *couldn’t*.

He could feel himself slipping under, losing control as another panic attack tried to drag him down to the depths of horror.

Before he could hyperventilate, he felt something, though. Warm arms were wrapped around him, a soothing voice whispered in his ear, and there was a steady heartbeat against his eardrums, drawing him to a more composed state.

“I’ve got you, babe.” Jordan’s voice reached through the pounding in his ears. “I’m never going to let anything hurt. Follow my breathing. In...” Isaac inhaled. “And out.” Isaac exhaled, feeling his heart stop racing and move to a more manageable tempo.

“Again.” Jordan asked, and Isaac nodded as he breathed deeply again.

“I’m sorry.” Isaac whispered when he could speak.

“How is this you’re your fault, babe?”

“Panic attacks...unattractive.” Isaac panted with a weak chuckle.

“I will admit, there’s nothing attractive about a panic attack.” Jordan conceded.

Isaac could feel the sharp pain of the words, and he let his head drop.

“Wait!” Jordan said, sighing in frustration. “I didn’t mean...Frak, I’m such an idiot. I didn’t mean that the way it came out. All I meant is that...I hate seeing you hurt. I hate seeing you scared. You’re beautiful, Isaac.” He added with a chuckle, running his fingers through Isaac’s hair.

Despite his panic attack, Isaac smiled. There were moments when he was strong and sure of his relationship with Jordan, but there were others...when his anxiety was already in overdrive where his vulnerable nature made every word spoken have so much more of a drastic impact.

“Are you feeling better?” John asked, taking Isaac from his thoughts. He nodded.

“Jordan...Jordan’s good at helping with that.”

“He’s your anchor.” John said, nodding, a small smile playing at his lips. “Derek

does the same thing for Stiles.”

It wasn't hard to believe that Jordan was an anchor of sorts for him and though his paternal side reared its head and snarled at the thought, Isaac's rational side accepted it, knowing that Jordan was keeping him grounded. He couldn't very well take care of Sergei in the midst of a panic attack.

“You're my anchor.” Isaac affirmed, resting his against his boyfriend's chest.

“And I always will be.”

#

Isaac felt guilty as he joined Sergei in the game room. The solution they had reached was one in which Danny would be questioned, as well as anyone who he had shared a class with during the time he had highlighted. He knew that only one of them could be the stalker and therefore, he was subjected a lot of innocents to questioning. When Sergei curled up against his chest, though, he realized that anything was worth the safety of his son. He'd give his life if he had to, and if he was willing to die, he was certainly willing to have every citizen in Beacon Hills questioned.

“Why didn't Mr. Stillinski stay, papa?”

“He was just coming by for a quick visit, he'll come over for dinner, tomorrow.” Stiles said, with a smile that barely covered the worry in his eyebrows.

“What did you talk about, papa?”

“Just grown-up things, Seryozha.” Isaac said with a grin.

“You're not sick?”

Isaac shook his head and Jordan scooted closer on the couch. “I promised to tell you if he was, didn't I?”

Sergei nodded, and Jordan ruffled his hair. “Well then, believe me when I tell you that your papa is not sick, he's fine.”

Isaac didn't feel very fine, but he wasn't sick, which was all that Sergei needed

to know.

“I had fun today, thank you for taking me to the zoo, papa.”

“You’re...you’re welcome, kiddo.” Isaac said, a sudden epiphany washing over him. Sergei didn’t seem to realize that Isaac had spoken any differently, but Jordan raised an eyebrow at him. Unable to speak about what he had just realized, Isaac pulled out his phone and wrote a text, instead. He handed the phone to Jordan rather than sending it, since the latter seemed like an unnecessary level of complication

The box was terrifying, but there was nothing in it about the zoo.

Jordan considered it for a moment, before his mouth opened in shock. His fingers flew over the screen, before he handed it back to Isaac.

You were safe. The patrol kept him at bay.

Isaac nodded, almost chuckling. His panic attack had been brought on partially by the fact that he wasn’t sure if he’d ever be able to leave the house, again, but the fact that the stalker hadn’t mentioned seeing him at the zoo meant that he hadn’t *been* at the zoo, which gave him hope that perhaps it wouldn’t be so terrible to take Sergei into the real world.

Isaac looked at the clock and found himself startled that it was already midnight.

“How does bed sound, Seryozha?”

“I want to stay up, papa.” Sergei whined, though with a definite drag in his voice that suggested that he was tired.

“No, I think you want to go to bed.” Isaac argued with a chuckle. “Your uncles and the video games will be there tomorrow.”

“Can I sleep in your bed, papa?”

“I told you that you can sleep in my bed anytime that you want.” Isaac said picking his son up. “It’s bath time, first, though.”

Sergei was old enough to bathe himself, though Isaac still stayed next to the

door, the attest calling card from his follower making him a little nervous. Jordan trailed after him, not breathing a word of complaint about the fact that they were sitting outside of a bathroom, doing nothing.

“How are you feeling?” Jordan asked.

Isaac shrugged. “It’s...if it wasn’t for you and Sergei, I’d probably be in a psychiatric ward, but...I know that I’m safe with you, and having Sergei means that I have to compartmentalize things, which makes them less traumatic than they should be.”

“You’re too sweet for this to happen to, babe. I just...wish I could have protected you from it.”

“But you couldn’t, vydrachka, and that’s not your fault. I...it happened before we were a thing.” Isaac said, thinking back to the man who had talked to Sergei at the mall, the very memory giving him shudders.

“I may not have been a part of your life, yet, but I am now, and I’m going to find out who this is, and...” He stopped and let out a huff.

Isaac chuckled. “It’s alright, you’re an officer of the law, and I know what you *have* to do.”

Jordan shook his head. “It’s not what I’m supposed to do...” He let out a sigh and continued in a whisper. “It’s what I *want* to do.”

“What you-?”

“Isaac, I know that I have no right to feel this way, but for what he’s done...a twisted soul like that isn’t going to change by sitting in a room by himself.”

Isaac was a little shocked and a little...frightened. Jordan’s voice took on a calm and cold fury that Isaac had never heard, before. Jordan was willing to kill to make sure that he was safe, and it was unexpected. Isaac was willing to do so, to defend his son, and that Jordan held him in the same esteem was both scary and comforting.

The small, corrosive monster within him that wanted to get vengeance wanted to let Jordan do it. He wanted to smile and nod, and conspire to let Jordan do

whatever it took to remove the stalker from their lives...the more humane part of him, however, couldn't allow that to happen. If there was a moment of self-defense, that was one thing, but he wouldn't allow Jordan to destroy himself for him.

"No, vydrachka, you won't. You're going to arrest him."

"Isaac, he-."

"I know what he did, Jordan. What he's *doing*, and it scares the hell out of me, but...Look, I won't pretend that I know you perfectly, but the Jordan that I know, the Jordan that I'm falling in love with...He isn't the type of man to kill out of revenge. Wanting to make him suffer for what he's done to me and to Sergei is... it's a level of protection that I can admire, but it's not something that I'd actually want to have happen. You're an officer, Jordan, unless he's hurting me or my son...you'll arrest him, because regardless of how well I know you, I know that that's the type of man that you are."

Jordan nodded, but pulled Isaac into a hug. "You're right, babe, but regardless of how he is resolved, *I* am resolved to ensure that you are kept safe, no matter what the cost."

"I'm with you." Isaac said. "I know that I'm safe."

Notes for the Chapter:

More canon references with anchors, because I'm classy like that.

I also just noticed that I make the chapter titles something innocuous...

Also, more clues or is it a red herring? Only I know.

I'm evil.

38. Crass

Summary for the Chapter:

Derek has an idea for Isaac and Jordan gets a little too defensive.

Isaac

Stiles' weekly dinner was another bright spot in Isaac's life. He made another series of rich, Russian dishes and grew infected by the excitement that Sergei was exuding. Isaac cherished moments when he could forget that there was a sociopath chasing after him.

"I've got to say, man, my culinary palate has grown much more complex since you moved in." Derek said, stealing a bit of sauce from the pot on the stove.

"That's what I live for." Isaac said with a smirk. "Your cultural enlightenment."

"Take it as the compliment that it was meant to be. No one in town has anything on you."

"I highly doubt that."

"Well...I will admit that I'm not exactly the most outgoing person, so I haven't tasted all that Beacon Hills has to offer, but you certainly make the best that I've had in a while."

Isaac blushed. "Thanks, Derek, that's...I'm glad that someone else can enjoy it."

"I actually didn't come in here just to steal food. I wanted to talk to you."

Isaac's heart dropped. His immediate thought was how little he knew Derek and that there was probably a limit to the amount of danger Derek wanted to have his husband in.

"Look, Derek, I know that it's hard having me here. You don't have any reason to like me, but-."

"Whoa, man, what are you talking about?" Derek asked.

“I have a stalker after me, and you probably don’t want Stiles in that kind of position.”

Derek nodded. “You’re right, I don’t...” He began, but before Isaac could even feel sick over having to move, again, Derek continued. “I don’t like seeing it happen to you or Sergei, either. I already told you, you’re family. I’m not kicking you to the curb.” He looked around. “He fucked with you, which is just as bad as fucking with Stiles in my book. And, he fucked with Sergei, which is a capital offense as far as I’m concerned.”

Isaac made a mental note to glue his feet to the ground, staple his shoes, anything to make sure that he stopped jumping to conclusions.

“Which is something a logical person might think.”

“You’re logical, Isaac, you’re just...scared, and working in defensive mode. That’s actually what I wanted to talk to you about.”

“Defensive mode?”

Derek shrugged. “Kind of.” He reached into his back pocket and pulled out a crumpled brochure with a picture of the Buddha on it, handing it to Isaac. It was for a Buddhist center at the corner of Beacon Hills. Apparently, they had meditation course, Tai Chi, yoga, and even a pot luck once a week.

“It’s a little cliché, but this is Beacon Hills, so...”

“Thanks, but...” Isaac felt a little awkward. “I’m not very...I mean-.”

“Oh, I’m not trying to convert you. I’m not a Buddhist, but I do find the meditation helpful. I needed it...after...after what happened with my uncle.”

“So, you go and meditate, and...What?” Isaac asked, raising an eyebrow.

“It’ll calm you down a bit. I may not be as attuned to you as Jordan or Sergei, but I can see you, especially after he sends you something, and you’re one of the tensest people on Earth. You’ve carried burden after burden for years, you deserve a little help with that.”

Isaac was touched and cracked a smile. “Do they allow police escorts?”

“Well, seeing you and Jordan...I’m doubting that he’d stay behind, the other officers can stay in their cars, and...I’d be there. I have a concealed carry permit.”

Isaac had to admit that those were all excellent reasons. His fear was making him hesitant, and yet, at the same time, it made him want to go more. The stalker wasn’t going to force him to hide away from the world, he deserved to be a free citizen. He might have lost his confidence, but he wasn’t going to lose his freedom.

“This could be good.”

Derek nodded. “I think that it might be. It helped me a lot. I tried to get Stiles into it, but...you know how he is.”

Isaac laughed. “You tried to get *Stiles* to sit still and meditate? Have you met your husband?”

Derek grimaced. “Yeah, we almost got banned for life.”

“Without Stiles, though, this could be a good thing. I’d...Sergei...”

Derek tapped the brochure and Isaac looked down to where his finger was. Emblazoned next to a cheesy icon of a smiling sun were the words:

Free Childcare for All Participants

“Oh.” Isaac said, nodding. “As long as Jordan and Stiles stayed with him, I’m on board.”

It was something odd. Planning to spend time with Derek. It was also extremely healthy. The reason may have been less than ideal, but Isaac was going to hang out with a friend, it brought almost the same level of joy as having his first date with Jordan.

#

“Russ-sky pit-anyane!” Scott shouted when he came through the door, the call triumphant sounding, if not any form of Russian that Isaac recognized.

“Was that supposed to be a language?” Stiles asked, poking his head from the game room with an eyebrow raised.

Scott blushed and rubbed the back of his neck while Allison rolled her eyes.

“He tried Google Translate.” She explained with the tone of one who was apologizing.

“That’s what I use.” Jordan said, blushing, and looking down at his shoes.

“Ah, don’t be down, vydrachka, you do Russian great.”

“I bet he does a Russian great.” Scott said, waggling his eyebrows. Isaac only allowed it to pass because Sergei wasn’t in the room, but Jordan shook his head.

“That’s not funny.” He said, glowering. “Isaac and I haven’t taken that step.” Isaac put a hand on his boyfriend’s. While he was touched that Jordan was willing to defend his honor, he was positive that Scott had been meant no offense.

“I was only kidding.” Scott said, quickly, his frown accentuated by his jaw. “I didn’t mean...I mean...”

“It’s okay, Scott, I know what you meant. Here, why don’t you come and help me in the kitchen?” Isaac said, worried that Jordan’s protectiveness had scared Scott into wanting to leave.

“Are you sure?” He asked, fidgeting with his thumbs while Allison and Stiles looked on a little awkwardly.

“Yeah, just let me talk to Jordan, real quick.” Isaac said, taking Jordan’s hand, and pulling him towards his...their room. Isaac could hear Stiles talking to them both as he moved down the hallway, past the sounds of games coming from the ‘nerd den’.

“What the hell was that, vydrachka?”

“He was...I don’t like people making light of what we have.”

Isaac let out a breath, his anger giving way in the face of Jordan, who looked like

he had shot a puppy. It wasn't as though Isaac was the type to forgive instantly, but Jordan was certainly testing that constitution.

"You can't...scare away the few friends I have if one of them makes a joke."

"I know, I know, babe, I just...overreacted, I'm...I'm sorry." Jordan's voice took on an astounding turn. It dropped, as did his eyes. "I'll...I'll go." He whispered the last words in a broken sigh, and Isaac couldn't allow him to suffer, because the words wounded him.

"Jordan, I don't want you to leave." Isaac said, keeping a firm grip on his hand. "Scott was just joking, though. He can be crass."

"I just...I've been in love before, and he didn't reciprocate, so to feel what I'm feeling for you, to be falling for you, and have someone make light of it, while I'm trying to find a man who wants to hurt you...I just..."

"He wasn't making light of it, vydrachka, he was just making a joke." Isaac said with a chuckle.

"I'm a terrible person, I yelled at your friend."

"No, you're...a touch overzealous, which I kind of find attractive, as long as Scott is still out there."

"I swear, Isaac, I won't do that, again, I don't...I will never hurt you, and that means your friends."

"I still trust you, Jordan, I don't want you to leave, I...Just be nice, yeah?"

"I will, I swear." The hope returned to his voice, and he gave a tentative smile. "No boot for me?"

Isaac shook his head. "No boot."

There was especially no boot when Isaac came out to see Scott laughing with Sergei.

"Scott...I'm sorry." Jordan said, bashfully.

“I insulted your man, I get it.” Scott said with a shrug, the smile on his face not diminishing. “Bring that to the ring with the...thing, and this guy will be great.”

“But, I am...sorry.”

“And I am...over it.” Scott said with a smile. His eyes drifted over to Sergei who was admiring the *fleur-de-lis* on Allison’s necklace. “I was there, man. I watched what my friend went through, and seeing someone give a shit about him isn’t going to scare me off. I was hurt because I thought I had hurt *him*, not because of what you said.”

“That doesn’t make it right, though. You’re his friend, you’re not out to hurt him.”

“I’m not, but I know that you’re not, either, and...it was a slip up, just...we’re good.”

Scott still trailed behind Isaac as he returned to the kitchen while Jordan sat on the couch, his tail still a little between his legs.

“He cares about you.” Scott said before Isaac could apologize again.

“He does.” Isaac replied, nodding. “He’s...I think he’s frustrated because we haven’t found out who’s following me, yet.” Isaac said as the thought formed in his head. “I wish he wouldn’t, though. It’s not his fault.”

“Well, I could have done with a warmer welcome, but that glint in his eye...there’s a bit of John in that.”

Isaac blanched. “You know that we share a bed, right?”

“I just meant that...he’s looking out for you the same way that John did. I...You came back, got a stalker, and...he’s looking out for you.”

“He really is.” Isaac said. “Do you remember when we were little and Allison used to go on about her wedding?”

Scott snorted. “Before I knew that she was the one love of my life? Yeah.”

“Those...silly, giddy, childish fantasies about love...I get it, man.”

“It’s scary, isn’t it?” Scott asked, his eyes widening. “I mean, twenty-first century or not, boys grow up with this certain...manly persona that’s supposed to be everything, and then you meet her...” His eyes drifted towards Allison who was in the middle of a story, “or him...” Isaac’s eyes found Jordan, who gave him a small smile, which Isaac returned, “and none of that matters, anymore. I think that’s how we know that we found the right person, because it’s the one person we don’t want to put on airs for.”

Isaac wasn’t sure if it was intentional or not, but Scott’s words were relevant in more way than one. It was true that Isaac felt that way about Jordan, and that he could simply be himself, share his fears, his joy, but it seemed that Jordan did, too. He had felt offended that Scott had made a wise crack, and had responded without regards to social convention.

“So, what are we cooking?” Scott asked with a grin.

Notes for the Chapter:

The chapter is shorter than I like, but that happens sometimes. I wanted Jordan to cross the line as far as protectiveness went and it won't be the last time, either.

I thought Scott's joke was funny, but I'm awkward like that.

I've been typing ahead and whenever I reach 10,000 word, I post a chapter, so I'll see you then.

Thank you, all.

39. The Scent of the Man that I Love

Summary for the Chapter:

The weekly dinner commences and a stranger takes note of the opportunity

Notes for the Chapter:

WARNING: MAYBE POTENTIAL TRIGGER ISSUES!

Isaac

“So, Stiles told me about your awesome job opportunity, but I’m not even joking, man, you should ignore that, and bring Beacon Hills your food.” Jackson said around a mouthful of blini.

Isaac blushed. “You only like it because it’s exotic, when we were kids, I used to live for the days when I went over to Stiles’ for American food.” Until his mother had died, and Isaac had realized how important culture and family were.

Jackson took another bite and closed his eyes. “Nope, I’m pretty sure that it’s just fuc...flippin’ delicious.” He said, catching himself on his cussing, almost too late.

“Thank you.” Isaac said, his cheeks still red. He was pretty sure that Jackson was only being nice to make up for the way that he had behaved before, but he enjoyed the compliment nonetheless.

“Can we go back to the job offer? What happened?” Allison asked.

“I...when we went to the zoo, the dean was there-.”

“The dean as in...your dean?” Allison asked Stiles and Jackson, who both nodded.

“So, he heard me speaking Russian to Sergei, and told me that teaching Russian would be much better than teaching philosophy. So, I’m probably going to do that.”

“That’s awesome!” Allison said.

“Yeah, congratulations!” Lydia added.

“Thank you. I’m really excited. Though, I’ll tell you what, Jackson. If I fail at being a professor, I’ll open up a Russian diner.”

“I’d make sure that you didn’t regret it, my father *is* the richest man in town, and I can guarantee profit, if not patronage.”

“That’s sweet, man, but...I think I’ll stick to teaching my mother tongue. It’s...easier.”

Jackson nodded and took another bite of his food. Isaac turned his eyes to his boyfriend to find Jordan still looking a little down.

“Hey, are you alright?” He asked, bumping his shoulder.

Jordan nodded. “I still feel bad.” He whispered.

“I don’t. Like I said, there’s probably a better way that that could have gone, but once the initial shock wore off...it was kind of nice...like you were defending my honor. And I also know why you did it. Your last...relationship didn’t go that well, and now you have the chance to defend someone that you care for...It’s...romantic...in a very eighteenth century sort of way.”

“Well...you did call me your prince.” Jordan said, looking up with the shadow of a grin on his face.

“And you still are.” Isaac assured him. “My little otter prince.” Isaac looked up at the sound of someone clearing their throat to find the entire table staring at them with sappy smiles on their faces, and just as Scott had said, Isaac didn’t care. He felt that he was being cute with his boyfriend and it made him feel good.

“Okay, I know I teased you in high school, but you two are seriously cute.” Jackson said.

“Thank you, I like to think so.” Jordan responded, sounding a little cocky.

“Papa, if he’s your prince, who are you?” Sergei asked, making Isaac feel a special hatred for hetero-normative fairy tales.

“I’m...uh...I’m-.”

“Your papa’s as much of a prince as I am.” Jordan supplied for him, birthing new butter. “In the real world, princes can fall in love with each other...though I can’t name any real world examples.” He added under his breath.

Sergei accepted the explanation, though.

“If you’re both princes, then what am I?”

Isaac was a little awed at the question. He wasn’t sure if it had merely been a slip up by his son, or if it had been intentional, but his words had melded himself, Jordan, and Isaac into a family. The very best part was that Jordan seemed to have noticed and was smiling as wide as he had since his protective streak had reared its head.

“Seryozha, you have always been and will always be my everything. You are my sunshine, my oxygen, and my soul.” Isaac said, kissing the side of his head.

“But, papa, I already knew that, I want to be a prince, too!” Sergei whined, making Isaac chuckle.

“Ah, come on, Isaac, make the kid a prince.” Scott said.

“Alright, Sergei, you’re a prince, too.”

#

“In terms of fun days, I’d count that as one.” Jordan said as he armed the security system.

Isaac had to agree, the night had gone great, they had played board games, and Isaac’s friends had continued to dote on Sergei. Sergei had worn himself out changing between Monopoly and Sorry, and by the time that they had called it a night, Isaac had had to carry Sergei to his bed, checking his son’s closet as a point of concern.

Even though it was the night before Jordan had to be back to work, Isaac was very much looking forward to spending a night in bed with his boyfriend. His son always came first, and if Sergei asked to be in bed with him, Isaac wouldn't hesitate before saying yes, but since his son had decided to stay on his own, Isaac was going to take full advantage of the situation he had before him.

Jordan did for Isaac what Isaac had done for Sergei, checking even under his bed, before nodding his acceptance in the safety of the room.

"We're safe."

"Good, that's...that's good." Isaac said, able to push the stalker to the back of his brain while he traced his lips with his tongue, an action which Jordan watched with panting breath.

"Isaac, I...when you look at me like that..." Jordan breathed, making Isaac snap his mouth shut.

"Sorry." He whispered, and Jordan gave a dry cough.

"For what? I meant...Isaac, I have the greatest respect for you as a man and as a father. I think you're funny, smart, and brave, but...I'll admit there's a primal part of my brain that just makes me want...naughty things when you look at me like that."

There were more butterflies, but instead of merely resting in his stomach, they turned into warm syrup that thudded through his veins and pooled in his cock.

Still, while Isaac could admit that he had a similar primal nature as Jordan, though his was still more nervous than the deputy's.

"I'm...I didn't mean to...Jordan-."

"You're still not ready, and that's nothing to apologize for." Jordan said, taking his hand. "Jordan, you are...you're more than worth waiting for. Make a vow to me, right now that we won't be intimate until fifty years from now, and you'll still find me right here, by your side, wanting nothing more than a kiss."

That uplifted Isaac's spirits and he smiled. "Well, I can comply with that." He said, allowing Jordan to pull him into his arms, their lips meeting for what was

sure to be a long time.

#

The man leaned closer to the monitor, his breath making the image a little blurry as he dragged his tongue across the screen, wishing that the statical, metallic taste could be the sweat from his boyfriend's body. The idea to place cameras in Stiles' house instead of leaving another love note or gift had been one of his most brilliant ones. The small window when they had left the security off when their friends had come over had been too perfect for him to pass up.

The man moaned and palmed his cock through his jeans when he thought back to his little trip to his lover's house.

"Was that supposed to be Russian?" Stiles' voice drifted down the hallway, making the man's heart thud for a moment before he realized that he was safe. Stiles was no doubt just playing game with his son, something that the man didn't exactly like, but was willing to ignore his son having fun with another man for the time being. Isaac had forgotten about him. They had shared a spark, and until he remembered that, the man would have to accept his son playing with the...interlopers.

Oh, how he wanted to kill that deputy. That stupid baby face, his head-strong attitude. The cocky little fucker thought that he could keep them apart, but the man had no intentions of letting some arrogant bastard get in the way of true love.

The man had a mission, and it would ensure that he and Isaac were even closer, but he couldn't help but let his eyes drift around Isaac's room. The clothes strewn about, a stuffed monkey on the dresser, the bed which was unmade. He couldn't help but slide himself over the silk sheets, feeling the chill of their emptiness, and imagining that they were warm with his boyfriend's body heat. He imagined that he was holding Isaac and Sergei, his most precious possessions, and felt the warmth of belonging flow through him.

They belonged together as a family, and he knew that he could get Isaac to see that. Once Isaac saw how much he loved him and the little tyke, they would form a bond far outstripping anything that some no-brained deputy could bring.

Wishing that he was in the bed that he belonged in, the man managed to pull himself from it before doing what he had arrived to do. The cameras were small, wireless, and solar-powered, practically made for the purpose that they were fulfilling. He needed to keep an eye on his boyfriend, so he could learn more about him, and so Isaac could know that he was always being watched and looked after. The man only wanted what was best for Isaac, he was just lucky that that happened to be him.

He hid the cameras well, knowing that fucking Jordan Parrish would no doubt love to use them to twist Isaac more against him. The man was doing nothing but looking after his man, and Jordan, the Bastard King, had already used that to make Isaac afraid. The man didn't understand. Love was a good thing. It was pure and bright, and he wanted to share that with Isaac. How could that be a bad thing?

Once the cameras were well hidden and turned on, the man took a few more moments to be in the space that was rightfully his. While he couldn't approve of Isaac being around so many of the others, it did provide him an opportunity to be around Isaac a little more.

Heading into the bathroom, the man was able to see the expression of bliss on his face in the mirror, and on a whim, moved forward to breathe on the mirror, fogging it, and used the back of his knuckle to draw a heart. He wanted to leave one of his love letters but couldn't risk leaving his fingerprints behind, as well. He did find something that he absolutely couldn't resist, though: Isaac's toothbrush. The thought of having his mouth where Isaac's had been was simply too irresistible and he placed the plastic in his mouth, imagining where it had been and where it was now...it was enough to rouse his cock. He allowed himself the luxury of groping it a little, but he didn't dare ejaculate. The risk of leaving behind such an obvious sign was too great for him, but he did come up with another idea as he put Isaac's toothbrush back where it went.

The man had to make his decision carefully, but he definitely wasn't going to leave without taking something of the man that he loved. Kneeling on the floor, the man saw before him a veritable buffet of items with which to sate his hunger. If he couldn't have Isaac, yet, he'd make do with something that bore his essence.

Picking up a lone sock, the man draped it across his face, and bit back moan as

the scent of Isaac invaded his senses. His cock throbbed in time with his heart and his fingers itched to rub out just one load. He restrained him, knowing that one day soon, he'd be able to paint Isaac's face with his seed.

The man chose a shirt, next. There was a juvenile image of a Pokémon on it, something the man found ridiculous. He knew that Stiles and Jordan had pushed Isaac into behaving like an immature child, and found it disgusting. If Jordan wanted to be a pervert and date a child, that was his business, but the man wasn't a monster, he'd want to see Isaac dressed like an adult.

The man inhaled the scent from the shirt. The musk was less defined, but it also had some body washed mixed in. It was exactly what he knew Isaac would smell like when he ripped open his shirt so that he could debauch him for the first time.

The moment the man touched Isaac's boxers, though, he knew that the choice had been made. Even the subconscious knowledge that Isaac's manhood had been housed in them was enough to make his cock twitch and splash precum within his pants. He didn't even risk taking in the scent, knowing that he wouldn't be able to hold back his orgasm if he did. Instead, he shoved the underwear into his pocket and took a last look around, before sighing.

"Soon, babe." He whispered. "We'll be together."

The man rubbed his treasure across his face while he watched Isaac curl up against Jordan. He knew that he'd be the man that Isaac cuddled soon, and that though, with the scent of Isaac's boxers, and his manual stimulation had his shooting his load while he cried out the name of his beloved.

"Isaac!"

Notes for the Chapter:

So...who deserves the creep award? I wanted to give you guys a little taste of the stalker, who is still nameless.

Next chapter soon, I promise.

40. Blueberries

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan makes Isaac's heart flutter, again.

Isaac

Isaac didn't want to get up. It was an odd feeling; hating the end of a weekend when he wasn't even working, but he knew that Jordan would leave him for work, and there was something that was just too perfect about the moment that he didn't want to leave it.

Isaac couldn't even bring himself to be grumpy that he had woken first, he pressed his cheek against Jordan's bare chest, and felt the hairs there tickling his nose. Jordan's heartbeat was soft and steady, and the rise and fall of his chest was soothing.

Very lightly, Isaac played with the hair on Jordan's chest, trying to find patterns on the hirsute man. His ministrations earned him a pleased moan from Jordan, who cracked open an eye, and smiled down at him.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to wake you." Isaac whispered. "I like playing with your hair."

"I don't mind, it feels good, makes me regret that I have to go to work."

"Other people in Beacon Hills need your help, though. It would be extremely selfish of me to keep you to myself."

"Well, I didn't take the job for the exorbitant salary." Jordan said, nodding. "I'll go be a hero for a few hours, and then come back to pick you up."

Isaac was confused. "Pick me up? Are we going somewhere?"

Jordan's face creased a little in a frown. "The picnic for the sheriff's office, remember?"

Isaac didn't until Jordan's words brought it back. "I...do now. I'm sorry, with

everything that's been happening..."

"It's alright, babe, we can do something else." Jordan said, sounding sincere, but Isaac shook his head.

"No, we can go, I'm actually glad that Sergei will get to go out again, I can't imagine that we could be anywhere safer than at a picnic for the office."

"Are you sure? We can do anything that you want to do-."

Isaac leaned forward and kissed him, silencing him. "I am absolutely down to go on a date with you. It should be fun."

"It will be, and I promise to keep you and your son safe."

Isaac chuckled. "You don't have to promise me anything. I know that you will, Jordan. I trust you more than anything."

Jordan was still smiling from Isaac's comment when he got up to take a shower, leaving Isaac infected with the same happiness. He found it impossible to be worried in that moment. He knew that the danger to him and Sergei was still present, but Jordan was his guardian. He was so much more than that, but there was something of a shield that Isaac could sense in his boyfriend's presence that made him feel safe as long he wasn't directly looking at anything that the stalker had sent.

"So, I was thinking about taking another step in our relationship." Jordan said, coming out of the bathroom and drying off his hair. Isaac couldn't help but let his eyes slid down Jordan's wet body, taking in the bulge around his boxers.

"I...uh..." Isaac was unsure what Jordan was talking about

"Toothbrush." He explained with a smile. "I was thinking about maybe...I mean, if you're up for it?"

Isaac nodded. "Yeah, that sounds great, and...maybe a drawer."

"A drawer could work." Jordan said. "I'd offer you one, too, but...we're always here."

Isaac's heart dropped temporarily. "We could...if you want. Spend the night at your place."

"I told you, I don't mind coming here. I don't have a security system, and I don't have a Stiles or a Derek."

Isaac cocked his head. "Are they crucial to living standards?" He asked. He loved Stiles and Derek and thoroughly approved of how they were with Sergei, but he wouldn't mind spending a few days a week in Jordan's home.

"They are. There's an overlap in their work schedules that allows them to be here for a few hours when I'm not. The more protection, the better."

Isaac could respect that, but he didn't want Jordan to feel trapped.

"I'm just saying, if you wanted to spend a night at your place, with or without me, I'd understand. A home is important, I should know." Isaac said, thinking about the Stillinski household which had been his true home after his mother had passed.

"I'm not going to deny that, but...babe you're assuming my home is an apartment on the other side of town. Where you are, where Sergei is, and where you're safest, *that's* home for me."

Isaac was used to the flutter of his heart at Jordan's words, but he still found pleasant shock at the words themselves. The way that Jordan saw him was as his *home* and Isaac felt as though he was liable to break down in tears at the confession.

"Jordan..." Isaac whispered, his vision blurring." That's...thank you. I...I can't speak to Sergei, but I can't imagine a home without you, either." For a brief moment, Isaac was scared that he was only saying it to keep up with Jordan, but that moment passed as he thought about it. He had seen it, only a few days prior. At the zoo, the reflection in the duck pond had shown him exactly that. A home...a family, they were one in the same, at least in the context that Jordan was speaking. They were building a family, which when placed in a domicile meant a home.

Jordan opened his mouth to say something, but shut it when his phone vibrated.

“I have to get to work, babe.” He sighed, looking down at it. “John wants help setting up.”

“Well, get going then, vydrachka, you know that I’ll be here when you get back.” Isaac said, smiling, and tipping his head up for a kiss.

“Don’t forget the alarm, and even though I can’t tell you what to do, I would feel a lot better if you stayed inside until I came to get you.”

“Once this is taken care of, I’m not going to be a kept houseboy, but until then, I’ll be a good boy, and stay in the house.”

Jordan’s face darkened. “You’re beautiful and amazing you don’t deserve to be locked away, I’m just-.”

“Worried about my well-being, which is why I’m accepting your request with a smile instead of a grumble.”

Jordan kissed Isaac, before pulling back. “I’ll see you in a few hours.”

Isaac dutifully armed the alarm once he had shut and locked the door. He headed towards Sergei’s room to wake him up, only for his son to run into his hip when he rounded the corner.

“Ow, papa. Vy kostlyavaya.” Sergei whined, holding his head. Isaac dropped to his knees, looking for any marks or blood. There was none, but that didn’t stop his heart from pounding.

“I’m sorry, son. Are you okay?”

Sergei rubbed his forehead with the heel of his palm before nodding. “I’m alright, papa. Is your hip okay?”

“I may be bony, but I’m sturdy. I’m sorry, I was just going to wake you up.”

“I’m awake, papa. I’m hungry.” Sergei said, his childhood invulnerability displaying itself when he bounced to his feet.

“Well, let’s go get you some food.” Isaac said, picking him up. He set Sergei on the counter, and got to work making him cereal.

“Papa, can I have pancakes?”

Isaac turned around and grimaced. “Jordan invited us to picnic, today. I don’t want you to spoil your appetite, but how about a compromise?”

“Compromise?”

“I’ll wake up early and make you pancakes tomorrow.”

“Only if I can have...chernika.”

“Blueberries it is.” Isaac said with a smile.

“What are we bluberry-ing?” Stiles asked, coming from the hallway.

“I’m making pancakes, tomorrow, Sergei’s compromise was that they include blueberries.”

“Papa said I can’t have any today because of the picnic.”

“Oh, that’s right, the picnic....I forgot. You guys are lucky.”

“No getting off from work?” Isaac asked and Stiles shook his head.

Stiles snorted. “Nope. I told my dad to move it to the weekend, but, Mondays are actually quiet. I mean, this is Beacon Hills, so it’s always quiet, but it’s easier to organize during the week.”

“You won’t go with us?” Sergei asked, looking crestfallen.

“I can’t, kiddo, I have work, but you and your papa and Jordan are going to have fun.”

“Will you be here, tonight?” He asked, making Isaac chuckle, fondly. The bond that his son had built with Stiles and Derek was very encouraging.

Stiles laughed, too. “Kid, I’m not moving out. It’s one outing that I won’t be there for.”

Sergei seemed sated by that knowledge and he began on his cereal without complaint.

“I’ll see you tonight. I’m not pressing or anything, Harris obviously adores you, but you might want to start on your application?” He made it a question as if to emphasize the fact that he wasn’t trying to goad Isaac into anything.

“I have a few hours to kill before Jordan gets back, anyway.” Isaac said, nodding, and opening the kitchen drawer to pull it out along with a pen.

“I doubt that you have to fill out that essay with anything too drastic since it was Adrian who approached you, just...tell him why you taught Sergei.”

“Well, I can’t exactly use that reason.” Isaac explained, quietly. “I taught him for the sake of his mother and my cultural heritage.”

“And the non-Russians of California shouldn’t be privy to that?” Stiles asked with a raised eyebrow.

“I didn’t mean it like that...though I guess I could put that.”

“Exactly. Like I said, you can put whatever you want, and he’ll take it. In fact...” He said, his eyes lighting up, “I bet you could write the whole thing in Russian and still get hired.”

“What does that say about his ability to take the job seriously, though, babe?” Derek asked, coming from the room with his briefcase.

“It’s me and Isaac, it’s almost expected. In fact, I’d bet Adrian would be disappointed with anything less.”

“All the same, man, I think I’ll stick to professionalism.” Isaac said with a chuckle.

“Professionalism is overrated.” Stiles said, plucking at his shirt which bore an Assassin’s Creed logo. Isaac was sure that one day he would be able to go to a class dressed as he liked, but he didn’t have the same confidence that Stiles did.

“He’s so cute when he’s flaunting himself in the face of social conventions.” Derek said, though with a genuine smolder in his eyes.

To play along, Isaac jutted his jaw out. “My boyfriend can’t flaunt social conventions at his job.”

“Yeah, but he gets a uniform, which is like, twenty times better.” Stiles argued with a sly smirk. Isaac had to admit, there’s was something definitely attractive about a man in uniform, and even though he wasn’t ready for that next step, he was more than willing to confess that Jordan was something special in his uniform.

“Regretting my career choice, babe?” Derek asked.

“Not at all. We still have Halloween.” Stiles said with a wink.

Stiles and Derek both reminded Isaac about the alarm system, and so Isaac made sure to arm it once they left, before taking the application with him to the game room to watch Sergei as he played Mario Kart.

If he needed another reason to believe that the decision to teach Russian was a better one, filing out the application was easy. Even without Isaac treating the thing like a joke, the reasons why he knew the language, why he had taught Sergei, they could be adapted to others. The need to preserve the heritage and culture of all people, no matter where they came from.

Notes for the Chapter:

Vy kostlyavaya = You're bony.

Not much to tell, Jordan is super cute, and so is Stiles for that matter.

Will post again, soon.

41. Too Far

Summary for the Chapter:

The picnic arrives and Jordan makes a mistake.

Isaac

“Babe, this isn’t a formal affair, you didn’t have to get dressed up.” Jordan said, though he eyed Isaac with a hungry look.

Isaac didn’t feel that they were *dressed up* exactly. Both he and Sergei were wearing button down shirts and khakis, but there were no ties or jackets.

“You’re wearing a uniform, I thought we could look a little presentable. Besides, we got new clothes, we should have the chance to wear them.”

“Babe...you’re always presentable. You’re you, and I can’t imagine being embarrassed. In fact, I’m jealous that you get to wear whatever you want.”

Isaac blushed. “I also consider this a date. Let me dress up for my boyfriend?” He asked with a small grin.

“Well, heck, if you’re going pull out the smirk, you can wear whatever you want.” Jordan said, smiling himself. “I can’t argue against you when you use that defense.”

“Well, I’ll keep that in mind, seeing as I’m not one for pouting.”

“Shame, I bet you’re cute pouting.” Jordan’s voice took on a deeper tone, and Isaac felt a shiver shot through his body. Jordan’s eyes dropped to Sergei, though, and his normal grin returned. “We should get going, though.”

Jordan took Isaac’s hand and Isaac took Sergei’s, leading him outside. It didn’t escape Isaac’s attention that Jordan’s eyes swept the driveway as he locked the door, but it also didn’t escape Isaac’s attention that Jordan had his gun. They were safe.

Jordan’s new car was certainly nothing to be scoffed at. A brand new Mitsubishi

Eclipse in a deep olive green. Isaac let out a low whistle, and Jordan chuckled.

“Insurance, plus...John felt bad.”

Isaac didn't return he laugh. Though he couldn't speak about it in front of Sergei, he felt guilty for what had happened. The stalker had destroyed his car, and Isaac felt as though it was his fault.

“I don't blame you.” Jordan said once Sergei was buckled in and Isaac had shut the door.

“If it wasn't for me-.” Isaac began, but Jordan shook his head.

“If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be the happiest man in California.” He said with a smile. “God, Isaac, you're...you're amazing, and I know that I keep telling you that, but if you think that I valued a car over you...I obviously haven't told you enough. I'm falling so hard for you, Isaac. What's a car next to that?”

Isaac was sure that he was on the verge of swooning, though he managed to keep steady while he and Jordan got into the car. He didn't directly respond to Jordan's words, but he took the man's hand, grateful for automatic transmission.

When Isaac saw the park, any lingering doubts he may have felt about his son being in public vanished. There were at least ten officers milling about, grilling, eating, talking, and laughing. All of them were armed, and Isaac knew that no matter how cocky or sneaky the stalker was, there was no way that he'd risk attacking with such protection.

Of course, Isaac had even less to worry about than any other parent. Sergei didn't launch himself from the car or seem too interested in running off and playing, instead he latched himself onto Isaac's pant leg as they approached the main grouping of tables. Jordan stayed close by and kept a firm hold on Isaac's hand. Isaac was sure that Jordan wasn't the type to be closeted from his work mates, but it still felt good that they could be open about their relationship.

“Isaac, you made it.” John said, his smile wide, and Isaac felt his son's grip loosen slightly.

“Of course. Can't pass up an opportunity to spend time with Jordan.”

“Trust me, man, the feeling is mutual.” A man said, stepping forward. He was rather short, though his boisterous voice certainly made up for it. “Pear Tree spent all day gushing about how his boyfriend was coming to see him.”

Jordan began to blush while the man held out a hand. “Greenburg, I had a first name, once, but I lost it in high school.” He had gained a little weight, but Isaac nodded as he recognized the oft-teased man.

“Yeah, I remember. Coach used to use you as the scapegoat.”

“Yeah...thankfully, that stage of my life has passed. How’ve you been Isaac?”

“Better.” Isaac said, think of the stalker, but then, squeezing Jordan’s hand, he smiled. “And so much worse.”

“Well, I want you to know that you and your son are safe here.” Greenburg said with a smile.

“Papa...” Sergei whispered, pulling on Isaac’s pant leg. Isaac crouched down to his level and looked him in the eye. “Papa, there’s a lot of people here.”

Isaac nodded. “There are, but they’re all safe. I promise you that no one here will hurt you.”

“But...I can stay next to you, right?”

“Of course you can, Seryozha.” Isaac said, not bringing up the fact that he considered his son’s clinginess an asset at that moment. Park full of officers or not, Isaac was still a protective father. “Can you at least introduce yourself to everyone?”

“My name is Sergei, I don’t like people hurting my papa.” Sergei announced to Greenburg who chuckled a little.

“Nice to meet you, Sergei, my name is Joshua Greenburg, if you need any food or anything, just let me know, okay? And, by the way, no one here would ever even *think* of hurting your papa. He’s part of the family.” Isaac was touched by that, though he wasn’t sure if it was Jordan or John who got him access to such a distinction.

Sergei nodded, but didn't say anything. Isaac wanted to admonish him for his rudeness, but realized that it wouldn't be right. If Sergei was nervous, Isaac didn't see how punishing him would make it better. Isaac grasped his son's hand and led him to one of the tables, before picking him up, and depositing him on the checkered tablecloth.

Jordan brought them both chilled cans of soda, and sat down next to Isaac so that their thighs were touching, which produced a flush in Isaac that had nothing to do with the heat.

"Thank you, vydrachka."

Jordan nodded. "Do you...I mean, you don't have to, but do you want to meet my workmates?" He asked a little sheepishly.

"That sounds good." Isaac said, turning himself on the bench so that his back was to Sergei. "Hop on, Seryozha." He assumed that Sergei would feel safer if he was in constant contact with him and Isaac knew that no one could take his son if he was on his back.

Sergei hesitated for a moment. "But...you said that I was too big to carry."

"That was before, I think I'm stronger now."

Sergei wrapped his arms around Isaac's neck and pulled himself up. Isaac stood, his recent diet making Sergei seem relatively light, and followed Jordan to a grouping of four officers.

"Tara, Alexis, Bobby, Kate, this is Isaac, my boyfriend, and Sergei, his son."

They exchanged greetings, and Tara discreetly promised Isaac that even though they were safe, she still had an eye on the tree line. Sergei's hands were a little tight, and Isaac quickly ended the conversation to allow Sergei to feel more comfortable. Before they left, Isaac noticed another usage of Jordan's apparent nickname.

"Pear Tree?" He asked with a smirk while they went to get a few burgers.

Jordan blushed and rubbed the back of his neck with his hand. "Yeah...it's from my days in the military. I brought it up to John once and the traitor told

everyone. It's kind of stuck."

Sergei actually giggled. "Grusha."

"Grusha?" Jordan asked, though with a smile.

"It means pear tree in Russian." Isaac explained. "And personally, I think it's cute."

"Well, if you think it's cute, then I can't possibly be bothered by it." For a moment, Isaac thought that Jordan was being sarcastic until he looked up and saw the wide grin on his face.

"So, it's agreed? I get to call you Pear Tree now?" Isaac asked, continuing the joke.

"I prefer vydrachka, but if Pear Tree or Grusha makes you happy..." He let the sentence drop, though his smile did not change. Isaac chuckled, he preferred vydrachka, too, but it was interesting to see Jordan accept it from him without complaint.

It was John who was making the burgers and he waved at Sergei as they approached.

"How's everything?" He asked.

"Good, thanks. Can't really complain when I'm on a date. Especially not with Jordan. And the...situation with the...violent video game hasn't escalated." Isaac was forced to come up with the euphemism on the spot, but John seemed to take his meaning, as he nodded, and Isaac continued. "So, I'm enjoying the day with Jordan and Sergei."

"That's good. Well, part of enjoying yourself is making sure that you're eating..." Isaac felt Jordan tense for a moment. "And that's what I'm here for. How many?"

"Three." Sergei said, before looking down from his perch. "How many do you want, papa?"

John chuckled.

“Sergei, you’re not going to...let’s just start you out with one, and if you’re still hungry after that, you can have another, alright.”

Sergei made a grunting noise, but nodded.

“Three.” Isaac said, though meaning their group.

“So...there was a look.” Isaac said as they headed to their table. He flipped Sergei around, making the boy shake with laughter, before setting him onto his seat.

“A look?” Jordan asked.

“When John talked about eating.” Isaac said, nodding.

“Oh, I just...” He eyed Sergei who was digging into his burger. “You’re eating, right?”

Isaac was a little nonplussed by the question. “Eating? Uh...pretty much.”

“I didn’t...it didn’t even occur to me until John brought it up, but...you weren’t, before, and it caused problems. I don’t...” He put a hand on Isaac’s arm. “I don’t want to lose you, babe.”

“Oh, that!” Isaac said with a laugh. “That was strictly related to money problems. Yes, vydrachka, I’ve been eating.”

“That’s good. And...sorry.”

“For what?” Isaac asked, taking a bite.

“Prying, I shouldn’t-.”

“Except that you should.” Isaac said, swallowing. “I mean, if you had been like, standing over my shoulder every day, it would be a different matter, but you asked a question, because you were worried about me, that’s hardly a capital offense.”

“Well, I *do* worry, though...in a non-offensive way.” Jordan said with a shy grin, before taking a bite of his food.

Isaac could live with any level of worry from Jordan *because* it was Jordan. The man's protectiveness had not yet ruined his life or made him uncomfortable. And all Jordan wanted was what Sergei wanted, for him to be well and healthy.

Isaac felt as though he could live with that.

"You've only offended me once, and that was when I didn't know you." Isaac said. "You're a very...God, Jordan, do you know how much I appreciate what you've done? How you are with Sergei, how you work with me...Don't feel as though you're being overbearing by asking if I've been eating."

Jordan gave Isaac a kiss to the side of his cheek, leaving a slight trace of burger grease, but Isaac didn't care, he turned back to his meal with a smile on his face, thankful for the day of peace and togetherness that he was able to enjoy with his boyfriend and his son.

Jordan

"That thing that we were talking about, earlier? I want to do it." Jordan decided as he watched Isaac throw a Frisbee to Greenburg, who then threw it to Sergei, who had to jump, but managed to catch it. The smile came effortlessly to Jordan who enjoyed seeing his boyfriend and his son play a carefree game.

He was standing next to Tara and Matt, both of whom had grim looks of acceptance on their faces.

"Are you sure, Jordan? I mean...He doesn't seem like the type who wouldn't want to know."

"I know." Jordan said, nodding. "He's so brave and strong." Jordan meant every word, and it was because Isaac was so brave that Jordan needed to do more to help. He couldn't find the son of a bitch who was harming his boyfriend, but he could still do more to protect him.

"I have to keep him safe. And this..." He gestured towards his laughing boyfriend. "This should be preserved. He deserves happiness, and he can't be happy knowing there's some psycho after him."

“But he already knows that, I don’t see how this is going to help.” Matt said, shrugging.

“Because, if he doesn’t have to see what that freak is leaving him, then he’ll feel protected, he’ll feel safe, and happy. That’s what he deserves. That man is... everything to me, and he’s been struggling to survive in the world for years. He didn’t come here to be stalked, and if I can do anything to take that burden from him...I’ll do it.”

“So...complete radio silence? He doesn’t know anything?”

Jordan nodded. “I’ll keep him up to date on our efforts to find the fucker, but...if he isn’t aware of the stalker’s gifts...he’ll feel better.”

Jordan knew that what he was doing was probably wrong, but when he saw Isaac, playing with his son without a care in the world, he felt his heart welling up with a protective urge that he couldn’t ignore. He would hide the truth from Isaac, but it would all be from the best.

Jordan was sure of it.

Notes for the Chapter:

So, this is Jordan going too far to protect Isaac, and it's going to come back to bite him in the ass.

They're having fun, though, which is good, right?

This won't be like some of my previous fics where this happens in the next chapter. Secrets are meant to be kept. :)

42. Coitus Interruptus.

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac and Jordan get closer to one another

Isaac

Isaac had to carry Sergei as they came back home, with Jordan taking the burden of locking the door and disarming the alarm upon himself. It had taken a meal and some warm words, but Sergei had finally opened up to the others at the park, playing Frisbee, tether ball, and even initiating a game of tag. Though it had worn him out, Isaac was sure that Sergei had had fun. Isaac had enjoyed himself, too, not least of all because Jordan had taken part without complaint.

Also on the list of good things was Isaac's continued safety in the hands of Jordan and the other officers. The stalker had not attacked and it was because of that that Isaac had been able to give his son a day with entertainment and without worry.

"You know, as far as dates go, this was certainly a memorable one." Jordan said as Isaac set Sergei down into his bed, before pressing a kiss to his forehead.

"It was pretty great. I mean...I had a good time, and the people from the station were great with him." Isaac said, motioning with his head towards Sergei's room. "I mean, it's only four, and he's all tuckered out."

"He's an aggressive tag player. I mean...He managed to outrun me, and I used to be a marine."

"Yes, but he's worn out and asleep, while you're merely looking attractively sweaty."

Jordan blushed, and so did Isaac, it was a bit more forward than he was used to being, but the fact that they had had a good day was making him bold, that, and the fact that Jordan did look attractive with his muscles glistening.

"I still think that a shower is in order. Do you mind?" He asked, jerking a thumb towards the bathroom.

Isaac nodded and threw himself back onto his bed, his eyes remaining on Jordan who seemed hesitant.

“Is something wrong?”

“I...” Jordan sighed and moved closer to the bed. “I loved seeing you happy today, and spending time with Sergei was great, there’s just one thing missing from a date.”

“What’s that?” Isaac asked, standing up.

“This.” Jordan said, pulling him for a kiss. Isaac melted into it, the strength of Jordan’s arms, the warmth of his mouth, even the slight hint of ketchup, all of it was perfect, and Isaac pulled them both onto the bed.

“Tell me when to stop.” Jordan whispered into his ear, before returning his lips to their previous position. The problem with Jordan’s proposal was that Isaac didn’t know *how* to tell Jordan to stop, because he didn’t want him to. He reached up and began to unbutton his own shirt, his finger shaking with nervousness.

Jordan pulled back, his breath ghosting over Isaac’s face. “If you want...to be undressed, let me?” He asked, and Isaac let out a nod, followed by a gasp when Jordan pressed a kiss to the newly exposed neck.

It had been so long, too long since Isaac had been touched in such a way, and he let out an embarrassing mewling sound as his toes curled and his cock hardened.

“More.” He whispered before Jordan could even ask what was wrong.

Jordan complied, opening the second button and mouthing at Isaac’s chest.

“Hair-.” Isaac began, but Jordan let out a pleased growl.

“Is hot. All of you is just...you’re so perfect, Isaac.”

Isaac might have normally had a pessimistic approach to Jordan’s words, but the way that his boyfriend was making him feel was just too good.

It was tortuously and deliciously slow, the way that Jordan teased his way across

Isaac's body like it was something to be savored. Another button and Jordan had access to Isaac's nipple, which opened a new world of color and a bombardment of pleasure.

Rough teeth, an insistent mouth, and coarse, fumbling hands had been Isaac's experience with sex up until that moment, but Jordan was gentle, and it made Isaac's body sing. The way that he had Danny had interacted had been so much different. It had been childish and foolish. Jordan was caring and knowledgeable.

Another button and Jordan gained access to Isaac's bellybutton, and Jordan worshiped it, peppering the skin with kisses, dragging his tongue across it and moving lower, but finding himself hampered by Isaac's khakis.

"Pants shouldn't be here." He said with a smirk as he looked up at Isaac. The smoldering look in his eyes was hot enough, but when his tongue lashed out to lick just below his navel, it made Isaac pant and arch his back, something that Jordan took advantage of. A gasp and one, sharp pull later, Isaac's crotch was exposed to the air as his pants came down.

Isaac's cock bounced against his stomach, while Jordan's eyes followed it, and he bit his lip. Isaac should have felt vulnerable and exposed before Jordan. Instead of shame, though he panted in need. He *wanted* Jordan to see him, wanted Jordan to touch him, and *needed* Jordan to taste him.

Jordan's eyes swept up to Isaac's face, wordlessly asking for permission, and when Isaac nodded, stayed locked on Isaac as his head dipped. The first touch of tongue to skin lit Isaac's skin on fire. It felt as though his bones were churning forth the flames that Jordan fanned with his lips and tongue.

"That's..." '*Fucking marvelous*' Isaac wanted to say, but the words simply wouldn't come. When Jordan deep throated him, Isaac lost all semblance of self and any coherence that would have made speech possible.

Isaac was made painfully aware of his lack of time-honed stamina when he felt his orgasm approaching at a quickly. What signs he gave, he wasn't sure, but with a *pop*, Jordan stopped sucking, teasing Isaac's head with his tongue.

"Not yet." He said. "I want to make this last."

With Jordan no longer performing his ministrations, Isaac could focus enough to

realize that his boyfriend was still dressed. Taking a little initiative, he swiped Jordan's arm, and managed to flip the man so that he was on his back. Jordan let out a surprised grunt, but allowed Isaac to be on top.

"Then I guess that I'll have to focus on you." Isaac whispered, his voice a little hoarse.

Isaac would never claim to be an expert on sex. He hadn't had any since he had conceived Sergei, but he was still able to draw out pleased pants from Jordan as he palmed the man's member through his pants, and kissed him.

Isaac tried to replicate what Jordan had done to him. He wanted the act to be as good for Jordan as it had been for him, but was a little unsure of himself. The thing that grounded him, that made him more comfortable was the pleased mewls that Jordan gave off as Isaac moved down his body. There was a musk there, hiding underneath the clothes, but Isaac found that he enjoyed it.

Danny had never been a drive-a-pink-Miata-and-drink-a-fuzzy-navel type of gay man, but when he and Isaac had been dating, he had been clean, and always smelled of body wash. Jordan's scent was markedly different, and Isaac inhaled deeply while he unbuttoned Jordan's shirt.

"Do I stink?" Jordan asked, a little breathlessly, and when Isaac looked up, the man looked worried.

"No, you smell good." Isaac responded, his words a little muffled but the fact that he was licking over Jordan's chest. Jordan had been right, the hair wasn't anything to be concerned about, in fact, Isaac realized that he liked it. The raw masculinity, the way that the hair felt as he dragged his tongue across it, it was all-.

"It's so frakking hot out there!"

Isaac jumped so bad at Stiles' voice that he fell off of Jordan and landed on the floor with a yelp.

"Babe! Are you alright?" Jordan asked, throwing himself from the bed, and landing next to Isaac, his concern touching.

"My ass is sore." Isaac said. "Though...I didn't think we'd made it that far, yet."

Jordan chuckled and helped Isaac to his feet before wrapping the sheet around him to protect his modesty.

Isaac was a little irritated with Stiles for having come home, before he realized that it was partially his fault for leaving his door open, and even more his fault for getting lost in the moment, when Stiles was due home, anyway.

“Sorry, I-.”

Jordan stopped him with a deep kiss, before he pulled back, a wide grin on his face.

“No. That was...oh, frak, babe, I’m so glad that we got to do that, and I can’t wait until we get to try, again. It was...I hate to sound cliché, but that was beautiful.”

Isaac nodded, glad that Jordan wasn’t mad, and he began to smile, though it turned to a bashful blush when he looked up to see Stiles in their doorway.

“Oh....so, how long do I have before you both chase me down to hack me into tiny pieces?” He asked, looking guilty.

“No hacking.” Jordan said. “We...got to spend some time together.”

“It was nice.” Isaac added, though he was still a little shaken by Stiles’ sudden appearance.

“That’s good. Look, guys, I’m sorry.”

“It’s alright.” Isaac said, smiling. “I mean...I think we’re all a little embarrassed.”

Stiles nodded. “Yeah, but...what’s life with roommates without walking in on at least one sexual situation?”

“A boring one.” Jordan said, chuckling. The fact that Jordan and Stiles seemed alright allowed Isaac to chuckle. Jordan had been right, what they had shared had been beautiful, and looking at it in regret would do nothing but make Isaac unsure the next time they had an opportunity to be intimate.

“Stiles, could you do me a favor?” Isaac asked, needing to take a shower, before he could ask, though, Stiles nodded.

“Already looked in on the kid, he’s still asleep. He looks cute in his little outfit.”

Isaac wasn’t even surprised.

“I’ll keep an eye on him, go get clean, you naughty boys.” Stiles said, turning towards Sergei’s room.

It was odd, but Stiles making the offer first made it easier for Isaac to invite Jordan to shower with him.

“Care to join me?” He asked, trying to make his voice sultry, but only succeeding in a high pitched squeak.

“Are you sure? That sounded a little...”

“Please?” Isaac tried again, triggering one of Jordan’s beautiful smiles.

“Alright.”

Stiles’ presence had changed the atmosphere from sexual to something more light, but when they were alone, again, Isaac couldn’t capture the rawness of the moment. He couldn’t find that fact too tragic, though. Jordan took his hand and led him to the bathroom. He removed the rest of his clothes and turned on the water. Even though they hadn’t finished...anything, Jordan still handled him gently, and began scrubbing his back.

“Are you okay, you know, with what happened?” Jordan asked as his strong hands roamed across Isaac’s body, feeling almost like a massage instead of a shower.

“With the sex or with Stiles coming in?”

“The sex. I...I wasn’t planning on it, it just-.”

“Sort of happened.” Isaac said, nodding. “You know, I wasn’t sure that I would be. When I thinking about the day that we’d get intimate, I didn’t know if I was ready, but....then it happened, and it was...really special and...right. I mean, I

know that we didn't get to finish, and I know that we weren't exactly...heading to the...anal thing, but I liked it, and I'm more than okay with it."

"I know how you feel. I thought...I mean, because of what happened before, I thought that it might...hurt us, but, it's you, and it didn't feel wrong. Like you said, it felt right."

"You know that I'd never hurt you like that, right?"

"I know, babe." Jordan said, turning Isaac around, and kissing him. "I trust you."

Notes for the Chapter:

So, I thought it'd be funny if they were interrupted the first time by Stiles instead of Sergei.

I don't want to spoil anything, but I do want to make it clear that this fic is endgame Jorsaac.

Thank you for all the kudos, it really means a lot.

43. Pink Duck

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac gets a panic attack while meditating.

Isaac

The air was thick with incense, making Isaac's nose itch. The smell seemed to be equally devastating to Sergei, who turned and shoved in face into Isaac's shirt.

"Stinky smoke, papa, I don't like it."

"Yeah, me neither, Seryozha."

Derek smiled encouragingly while Jordan's eyes scanned the small building, looking for threats. Isaac had had no idea what to expect from a Buddhist center, but the soft music the tinkling of a water fountain, and the incense smoke was nonthreatening enough.

"Welcome to the Beacon Hill's Sangha, where you may find refuge, how can I help you?" An elderly woman asked as she approached. She looked wispy as though she was fading away right before his eyes. Isaac took in the thin, graying hair, her translucent skin, and her thin clothes, and found himself wondering if it was intentional. Perhaps finding enlightenment cost one their body.

"Hello, Marsha." Derek said, stepping from behind Jordan.

Marsha's smile widened. "Derek, how nice to see you, and you've brought friends! Not your husband, though?" She asked, with a little smile.

"Relax, Marsha, Stiles is at home."

"Oh, there was no offense meant. Just because the monks don't like Stiles doesn't mean that I don't. He has a unique spirit. Talkative, but kind."

Isaac couldn't disagree with that statement and he smiled at the thought of others finally seeing Stiles the same way that he did. In high school, they had all been outsiders, considering Stiles far too hyperactive and talkative for his own good.

Isaac saw beyond that, though. The man who had taken him and his son in when they had nowhere else to go...that was a man to be trusted. The world needed more people like Stiles.

“So, who are your friends?” Marsha asked, making Derek smile.

“This is Isaac, he’s the one we’re here for, his boyfriend, Jordan, and his son, Sergei.”

Marsha made a small bow to each of them, which threw Isaac off, but considering that his knowledge of Buddhism was limited to what he had watched on T.V., he didn’t mention it.

Sergei had no such scruples, though he thankfully restrained his curiosity to his second language.

“Papa, pochemu ona luk?”

“Ona prosto byt' khoroshim, son.”

Sergei stared at Marsha for a moment, before he bowed, too, making the group chuckle. Isaac couldn’t really blame his son for being curious. He had already informed Sergei that he was going to spend some time in the children’s area with Jordan while he tried to meditate and release the burden of his stalker.

The picnic had provided him with a few hours of peace. Spending a day in the sun with the two people he cared most about in the world had been a welcome distraction and the sex had been even more of one, but that night as he had held Jordan in his bed, he had realized that that’s all they had been: distractions. The fear of losing his son to a demented psycho was still an ever present fear weighing down on his chest.

Marsha showed Isaac to the children’s area, a cheerfully painted room with several figures forming a mural that encircled the walls. The incense didn’t reach into the room, and the soft chanting coming from a speaker in the corner gave off a nicer atmosphere than the entrance hall, at least as far as Isaac was concerned.

There were six children and a bald, middle-aged man in saffron robes sitting at a plastic table in the center of the room. The activity of the moment seemed to be

finger painting and the kids were all excitingly gabbing away about their creations.

“Look, Paul! I made a pink duck!” A little boy called out, waving the picture of his duck.

“It’s a very beautiful pink duck, Carlos.” Paul said, encouragingly.

“Doesn’t that look like fun, Sergei?” Isaac asked, hoping that his son wasn’t too uncomfortable with where they were.

“What if they don’t like me, papa?” Sergei asked, nervously shifting his feet.

“Sergei, it’s impossible not to like you.”

“You have to say that, you’re my papa.” Sergei whined, and Jordan stepped forward.

“Well, I’m not your papa and I think the same thing. You’re impossible not to love, kiddo.”

Sergei gave a weak smile, before moving forward towards the group. It was good practice for the coming day when Sergei would be in school, and Isaac would have to watch him walk away every day. It would hurt, cut at his soul to see his only son go out into the world, but it was also necessary.

“Hi, I’m Sergei.” Sergei said as he approached the table. Isaac breathed a little easier noticing that Sergei spoke in English.

“Hello, little one, are you here to join us?” Paul asked, smiling warmly.

Sergei nodded and took a seat. One of the girls leaned over and showed him her picture, seemingly accepting the newcomer.

Isaac turned to Jordan, but before he even opened his mouth, Jordan spoke.

“He’ll be safe. I won’t take my eyes off of him until you come back. On v bezopasnosti so mnoy.”

Jordan’s new sentence was reassuring, and Isaac nodded, before giving him a

kiss.

“Thank you, vydrachka.”

#

“Feel the breath flow in. Concentrate on it and nothing else.” The instructor said. Isaac, with his eyes closed, tried to do as asked, but found himself too easily distracted. When he stopped and tried to clear his mind, all of his fears bubbled forth.

“There is nothing but your breath. The worries of the world, bills, war, pollution, all of it is nothing. Let the thoughts drift away as you focus on your breathing.”

In. Out. In. Out. Isaac tried concentrated the way he would if he was having a panic attack, but the thoughts of why he had panic attack appeared, instead. The man who was chasing him and his son. The absolute, bone-chilling terror of knowing that one was helpless in the face of a hidden threat. The stalker had clung to the shadows, and if he couldn't shine the light on him in the world, how was he supposed to shine a light on the thoughts of him?

“Does worrying about your money help you produce more? Can thoughts pay bills? Does fretting over the things that go bump in the night help banish them? Does your fear help you survive the struggles of life? Breath does. Breathing is crucial to your survival, so respect it enough to concentrate on it.”

Isaac tried, worried that he would never be free. Even if the stalker broke into the building at that moment, and was killed by Jordan, how would Isaac ever be free? How could Isaac not spend the rest of his life looking over his shoulder, waiting for an attack?

In. Out. In. Out. It became harder for Isaac to breathe. The meditation which was supposed to have help him overcome his fears was only letting him focus on them.

Isaac jumped when he felt a hand on his shoulder. He looked up to see Derek there, looking concerned.

“You alright?” He whispered.

“Focusing on the breathing, letting no one and nothing distract us.” The instructor said, giving them a small smile. Isaac wasn’t sure if she was telling them that it was alright to stay as long as they whispered, or asking them to leave. Derek seemed to think the later, though. He gently lifted Isaac up by the elbow and led him out of the room.

“I’m sorry.” Isaac whispered once they had shut the door behind them.

“Don’t worry about it, man. I’m...I’m sorry I pressed you into this. What happened?”

Isaac shrugged. “I tried to concentrate, to ignore my thoughts, but...in the quiet...all I could think of was him, and how he’s always there, watching me... watching us.”

“It’s obviously up to you, but...that will pass. When I started, I saw...that night, and I should have warned you, but...it gets better. You can find peace.”

Isaac chuckled. “At least I didn’t actually have a panic attack, just...the shades of one, I guess. Is that why you pulled me out?”

Derek nodded. “Yeah, I heard you hyperventilating.”

“Probably the rest of the room, too.” Isaac said with a chuckle, before straightening his face. “I’d like to try, again, though. If you’re right...if I can get him off of my back, that’d be nice. And...it’s nice to hang out with...a friend?”

“That was kind of question mark-y.” Derek said with a raised eyebrow, before letting out a chuckle. “Hanging out with sounds like a good idea, but you should have brought p that you wanted to sooner. It’s...there’s better places for friends to hang out than at a meditation hall, you know?”

Isaac shrugged. “I wasn’t sure. I mean...I guess I should have known.”

Derek laughed again and patted him on the shoulder. “Let’s...we’ll try again on Thursday, and in the meantime...We could go to a bar and play pool or...go bowling, I haven’t done that in a while.”

Isaac hesitated. He had expressed a desire to spend some time with friends, and had even warned Sergei that one day he would have friends and do things with

them, but...With the prospect before him, though, he was unsure of himself.

“It’s just...”

“Sergei.” Derek said, nodding. “I get it, man, I do. What about mini-golf, then?” He asked with a sincere smile. Isaac couldn’t help but laugh. It was more than a little odd seeing Derek Hale, the man he had feared in high school on principal alone suggesting that they go to mini-golf just so Isaac didn’t have to be separated from his son.

“That’s kind of you. You’re...you’re really an amazing man, Derek.”

Derek snorted and opened his mouth, but Isaac shook his head.

“I know, I raised a son, blah, blah, blah, but...I know I was gone, but Stiles...he still meant and means a lot to me, and it’s pretty awesome that you’re...you. I’m glad that you two found each other.”

Derek smiled. “Me too.”

Sergei ran into Isaac’s arms when he opened the door to the children’s area, and Isaac held him close.

“Papa! You were right, that didn’t take so long.”

“I told you.” Isaac said with a smile. “How did it go in here?”

Sergei ran back to the table, before coming back with a sheet of paper. He handed it to Isaac who felt his throat tighten up. It was crude, but through a father’s eyes it was beautiful. There were five figures: Isaac, Sergei, Jordan, Derek, and Stiles, all under the Cyrillic headline: **‘моя семья’**.

“Sergei, this...I love you so much.” Isaac said, sniffing as he pulled his son into a hug.

“So, it’s a good word?” Jordan asked, coming up behind Isaac.

“It means ‘my family’.” Isaac explained.

“Is that bad, papa?” Sergei asked, and Isaac immediately shook his head.

“No, son.” Isaac said, kissing the side of his head. “You did good, this is very sweet.”

“I agree. Thank you for considering me family, Sergei.” Jordan said.

“Thank you for protecting my papa.” Sergei replied with a smile.

“Come on, Seryozha, your dyadya is going to take us to mini-golf.”

“Will dyadya Stiles come, too?”

Isaac smiled and looked at the finger-painting that his son had given him. “Of course.” He said. “We wouldn’t be complete without him.”

Notes for the Chapter:

School starts next week, so the chapters might slow down, but for the time being, I'm a typing madman.

44. You Don't Even Know

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan intercepts his first letter and Isaac forms a plan regarding Jordan and Sergei.

Jordan

“I’m still not so sure this is a good idea.” Tara said as she handed Jordan an envelope.

Jordan took the envelope and shook his head. “I know. It seems wrong, but...” He paused as he looked down at the letter that had no doubt come from the stalker. Surrounding Isaac’s Cyrillic name was a collection of glittery heart stickers. The cheerful tone of the ‘gift’ was sickening and it hardened Jordan’s resolve.

“It’s the only way to keep his peace of mind. You...you didn’t see him last night. He panicked while he was meditating, but...after, when we went to mini-golf, he had such a great time. If he had woken up to this,” he held up the envelope, “that would all be shattered. He needs to know that he’s safe.”

Tara nodded, but still had a frown on her face. Jordan was stalwart in his belief that hiding the things the stalker sent was crucial to Isaac’s welfare.

Jordan ripped open the envelope and though he was prepared to find any number of horrifying things inside, he found nothing but a folded sheet of paper, stuck together with what seemed to be glue. If Jordan had had misgivings about keeping Isaac in the dark, they fell away at the words that the stalker had left:

You’re beautiful. When I watch you, it’s not to scare you, I just love seeing you. I don’t know why you’re so afraid of me. It hurts me because you have to know that I love you. I’ve left you gifts, I bought a gun to be a bigger man for you, I’ve made our son a room, I’ve cummed buckets just thinking of your face. Why would you pick that cop? Can’t you see he’s keeping us apart? I’ll stop him, though. I’ll kill them all if I have to.

I try not to be mad, baby, but it hurts so much.

I love you and I'm yours forever.

Jordan had to keep back the impulse to tear up the note, it was valuable evidence. When he moved his hand to see if there was any more, Jordan realized that what he had mistaken for glue couldn't have been an adhesive, it was too gritty. Unsure of whether or not it was a good idea, he brought the letter to his face, and sniffed the letter, a gag sending a shudder through his body as he recognized the chlorine-like smell of semen.

"Get this letter to the lab, he...left a sample." Jordan bit out, thrusting it at Tara, who scrunched her face before taking it.

Jordan knew that while they were dealing with someone who was outside the realm of sanity, he knew that the stalker was smart. He had eluded them and he had to have known that Isaac was giving his notes to the police department. Knowing this, Jordan didn't think it was likely that the results would bring them anything of value, but he had to try. All it took was one slip up, and he would be able to more concretely keep Isaac safe and without worry.

#

"Honey, I'm home!" Jordan called as he came through the door, moving directly for the alarm pad, to code his entry in.

Sergei emerged from the game room, first, running into Jordan's legs.

"Hi, Jordan!" he said, sounding happy to see him. Jordan reached into his pocket and pulled out his daily bag of Skittles before answering.

"Hey, kiddo. Kak proshel tvoy den'?" (How was your day?)

"It was good. Papa and I played video games and he hung my picture up in his room."

"Well, it was a very awesome painting."

Sergei blushed and grinned at the praise. It was the epitome of why Jordan was keeping secrets. If Isaac didn't worry, then Sergei didn't worry. It was a necessary evil, and Jordan was doing it for the good of his family.

It was worth it, though, when Isaac poked his head out from the hallway, the sun itself coming from his smile.

“Hey, vydrachka, how was work?”

“Absolute heck compared to what I’m coming home to.” Jordan said, as he moved forward to kiss Isaac. Jordan was glad that their relationship had quietly taken the step necessary for Jordan to be able to express his affection in front of Sergei.

“I missed you, too.” Isaac said when they separated.

“Sergei said that you two had a good day.” Jordan said.

Isaac nodded. “No creepiness, a happy son, and Stiles said that he’d take my application. I could be teaching Russian this fall.”

“That’s...you’re amazing, Isaac. There shouldn’t be any doubt in your mind, because there’s no frakking way that they’re going to give up the chance to have you.”

Isaac blushed and bit his lip. “It’s just Russian.”

“Nah, don’t be like that, babe.” Jordan said. He reached out and lifted Isaac’s face with a finger. “It’s you. It’s something that you can do that no one else in town can. You’re going to get the job, you’re going to be great, and I’m going to be here with you.”

“Is there room in that plan for dates?” Isaac asked. “Because these last few... spending time with you is-.”

“Perfect.” Jordan agreed, nodding. “You’re perfect.”

Isaac

Isaac considered himself to be fully in the net gains category. It had been five days since he had received anything from his stalker, he and Jordan were slowly nudging their way towards a more intimate relationship, and Sergei had made

some friends with the other children at Isaac's second attempt at meditation which had gone remarkably better. Isaac had actually managed to find something akin to peace, maybe not the exact calmness that he was seeking, but...its cousin.

The impending weekend had also brought with it a promise from Jordan for a date, though he had refused to say where it would be. Isaac hadn't been big on surprises growing up, they had usually involved a surprise stay in the closet for a low grade or finding out the limits of the human body in regards to punches, but when Jordan had refused to let him in on the secret, Isaac found himself pleasantly anxious.

"Beautiful world

mayowazu kimi dake wo mitsumeteiru (I would only look at you, without wavering.)

Beautiful boy

jibun no utsukushisa, mada shiranai no" (You don't even know how beautiful you are.)

Jordan's less than brag-worthy singing reached Isaac's ears as he came through the door, and even though it was less than perfect, Isaac couldn't help but smile.

Jordan came into the living room, where Isaac had been waiting and pressed a kiss to his lips.

"You are beautiful." Jordan said, his first words making Isaac smile and blush.

"I...I can believe it, when you look at me." Isaac said. The words felt cheesy, but despite all of Isaac's self-doubt, he *felt* beautiful when Jordan looked at him with that gaze as though he was the only man in the world.

"What were you singing?"

"It's not Russian, which I *should* be practicing, it's Japanese. It's a song by an artist who does the songs for *Kingdom Hearts*."

"You are such a nerd." Isaac said with a chuckle.

“And you-.”

“Jordan!” Sergei came running into the living room, receiving his daily bag of Skittles with a ‘thanks’ and a smile.

“I still can’t believe that you bring those for him every day.” Isaac said, watching his son munch on the candy.

“Can’t disappoint my guys. Besides, konfety khorosho.”

“Konfety luchshe.” Sergei corrected.

“Did I say that wrong?” Jordan asked.

Isaac chuckled and shook his head. “No, you said ‘candy is good’, he said ‘candy is the best.’”

“Jordan, papa said that since it’s the weekend, we can watch movies all night.”

“You still have a bedtime, Seryozha.” Isaac warned, though without any malice behind it.

“Why don’t you go pick out the movies you want to watch, me and your papa will join you in a minute.” Jordan said.

It was in the innocence of youth that Sergei ran out of the room without any questions, Isaac was less gullible.

“Something’s wrong.” He didn’t make it a question, because he felt that the reason that Jordan would have wanted Sergei to leave the room was so that he could share some news of doom and gloom. Jordan shook his head, though.

“Not unless you count the absence of success a major problem. We...” Jordan shifted in his spot uncomfortably. “We found a sample of the guy’s DNA, which was a lead, but it didn’t pull up anything.”

“The NSA is spying on every man, woman, and child in the country, and they couldn’t even archive DNA?” Isaac asked, though more of as a joke than expecting an actual answer.

“Babe, I swear-.”

“I know, vydrachka, I know. You guys will find him. I...I didn’t even know about the sample, so...there’s no chance that I got my hopes up.”

Jordan swallowed thickly and nodded. “But...but, we did find out that it wasn’t Danny, he gave us a sample.”

“Told you.” Isaac said with a small smile. The reminder that there was still a psycho out there made him a little uncomfortable, but Isaac hadn’t been bothered by the man in days, and if they had cleared Danny’s name, Isaac could trust that they were still taking the case very seriously.

“Don’t be so down, vydrachka, you guys are trying.”

“We are, babe, I swear we are. I’m going to make sure that he’s safe, that you’re safe.”

“You’re here, that’s all the safe I need.” Isaac said. Jordan was still frowning, so Isaac kissed him, and smiled when that brought a grin to the man’s lips. “Why don’t you tell me what you want for dinner, and...I’ll get started on it.”

“Pizza.” Jordan said. “It definitely feels like a pizza night. And that means...you know, ordering it.”

“Scared of what I would do to the good name of pizza?”

“No, babe, your food is delicious. I just...wanted to spend time with you, and that’s hard to do when you’re in the kitchen.” Jordan said, pulling Isaac close, and nuzzling against his neck, making Isaac bit his lip and moan.

“Why do you kiss my papa like that?” Sergei’s voice made Isaac pull away, quickly, though at the current point in their relationship, it was more to protect Sergei from general adult situations than to hide what he and Jordan had.

“Hey, Seryozha...I...uh...what?” Jordan asked, sounding flustered.

“Why do you kiss my papa like that?” Sergei repeated.

Isaac decided to let Jordan take the reins on the question considering that he had

been the one to be asked.

“Well...your papa and I care about each other, a lot. And when two grown-ups care about each other, they like to express it in ways that might seem funny to you.”

“But it doesn’t hurt him?”

“Sergei, I could never hurt your father. He’s very important to me, and I’m doing all I can to keep him safe and make him happy.”

“And that means kissing his neck?” Sergei asked, mashing his face in confusion, which cause Isaac to shake with silent laughter.

“Yep. When you get older, much, much older, you’ll understand that.”

Sergei looked at him for another moment, before he held up the Blu-Ray cases, while it seemed that Jordan let out a breath of relief.

“I want to watch these.”

Jordan nodded. “Why don’t you go put in the first one? Your papa and I will get some sodas, and we’ll get this night going.”

Isaac laughed when Sergei ran back to the game room and Jordan turned to him, looking a little paler than usual.

“That was bad.”

“It absolutely was not. That was the same explanation I probably would have given him.”

Isaac felt that Jordan had done well, just as he had always done in his conversations with Sergei. Though Isaac did not consider such a trait a necessity for a relationship to form, he found Jordan’s responses to be adequate, and his nervousness to be just a little cute.

Notes for the Chapter:

So, why did I add an Utada song? (Beautiful World is a song by Hikaru Utada, I do not own it.) Because I'm a gamer and I love her music. someone suggested that I should put the Russian translations next to the text, which I am trying out, if I slip up, let me know.

45. Hiking

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac makes an offer, which Jordan accepts

Notes for the Chapter:

IMPORTANT NOTES AT THE END!

Isaac

“I think that we should talk about Sergei.” Isaac whispered as they ate their pizza and watched *Tangled*. As usual, Sergei himself was too absorbed in the movie to eavesdrop, though Jordan still kept his voice down as he answered.

“About Sergei?”

Isaac almost chuckled at how nervous Jordan looked, except that he was loathe to cause Jordan any pain.

“It’s not a bad thing, I promise. I just...I think you’re still nervous around him.”

“Well of course I am. He’s...you’ve done a great job raising him, and...I don’t want to...ruin that.”

“But, you’re not ruining it, vydrachka, you’re really great with him, and I want you to feel more confident in yourself when it comes to him.”

“I’m not his father, though.” Jordan’s eyes were downcast, until Isaac lifted his chin with a finger.

“You and I of all people should know that that’s not important. I mean...I have a blood connection to him, but that’s not what makes a father. A father is something more. A father is...I’m not asking you to be his father, because that’s a line that *I’m* not ready to cross, yet, but the interactions that you’ve had with him have all been great. I mean...” Isaac chuckled, “You bring him frakking Skittles, you make him laugh, and you make his papa happy. If you think for a second that I don’t trust you to talk to him, to get to know him...you’re crazy.”

Jordan nodded. "That means a lot. That you would...trust me with him when I know that he's the most valuable thing in your life, I really appreciate it, and I'd like to be more...active, if you think that that's better, but...why?"

"Why?" Isaac asked, confused at the question. He felt as though he had taken the right step, but felt a little nervous that he had taken things too far. Keeping his sane mind, though, he waited patiently for Jordan to explain.

"Why now? I mean...you chose this moment for a reason, right?"

"Not really. I just saw that you looked uncomfortable when you were talking to him and I wanted to let you know that you don't have to be...unless...*does* it bother you?"

"No. I knew...I mean, I just wasn't sure if you were ready for it." Jordan said, taking Isaac's hand.

"I am. I don't trust too many people with him, but...you, for sure. Besides, it might...it might be necessary."

Jordan cocked his head. "Why-?"

"Jordan, I know that you and the other officers are working as hard as you can, but..." The truth was something fickle and cruel, but Isaac had come to accept something, a dark truth that had stayed hidden in his mind, until he was ready to face it. "We have to face facts, Jordan." Isaac whispered in a morose voice. "There's a possibility-."

"No." Jordan interrupted. "Isaac, we're not...I'm not letting that happen."

"You mean well, vydrachka, and I trust that you're doing all that you can to stop him, but if-."

"I won't-."

"*If*." Isaac argued. "If something happens to me, I need to know that he'll be taken care of, I need to know that he can look at you as someone other than the man who kisses my neck funnily."

"I can't imagine..." Jordan let out a sigh, his eyes staring pleadingly at Isaac. "I

can't picture a world without you, and I don't want to, but...you...your son needs a guardian, a protector, and even though I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that it's you, if...if I fail, I'll be that for him."

"Thank you." Isaac whispered pressing himself into Jordan. If Sergei needed a watcher, Jordan would be there, but in the meantime, he was going to spend as much time as he could next to and in the arms of his boyfriend.

"I'd do anything for you, babe, anything. But...I don't want to have to. I'm still going to do everything in my power to make sure that you are never parted from your son."

Isaac believed him, had always believed him, but it was still comforting to hear the words.

"I will leave Derek for you if you tell me that you got me pizza, too." Stiles voice made Isaac look up.

"Of course, man, in the oven, but, you're not taking the best thing in my life." Jordan said with a grin.

Stiles' head disappeared from the doorway, though it returned a moment later.

"So, any plans for this weekend?" He asked, his voice muffled by pizza.

"They're going a date, babe, remember?" Derek said as he joined them. The couch was a little crowded, but Isaac wouldn't have traded the moment for anything. All of them together was something that he cherished.

"I didn't realize that it was an entire weekend deal." Stiles replied, sarcastically. "I think it's been really good for all of us to hang out every weekend. I was thinking that we could go hiking on Sunday, before the dinner."

It was exactly the type of familial relationship that Isaac wanted to foster for Sergei and he nodded his agreement.

"How does that sound, vydrachka?" He asked, turning to Jordan.

"Sounds like a plan." He paused for a moment, before turning to Sergei, who was still absorbed in his movie. "Sergei, does that sound good?"

“Does what sound good, Jordan?” Sergei asked, turning around.

“Going on a hike on Sunday? Me and your papa, and your...dyadi.”

Sergei seemed confused. “You, my papa, and my dyadi...without me?”

“No...sorry, that was my fault, I meant, you coming with us, but...would that be okay?” He asked while Isaac nodded encouragingly.

“Oh. Yeah, if I can come, too.”

“Of course you can, I wouldn’t ever exclude you from a big thing like this.” Jordan said, smiling. “It wouldn’t be as fun.”

Sergei got up from the floor and wedged himself in-between Isaac and Jordan. “I think that you’re fun too, Jordan.”

Sergei wasn’t looking at him, but Jordan had a look of shocked happiness on his face.

“Told you.” Isaac whispered, though even Sergei’s obvious nature wasn’t applicable at such close a range.

“What did you tell him, papa?”

“That you were happy to spend time with us.”

“I like spending time with the people that I love, papa.”

Jordan smiled and moved his hand from Isaac’s to wrap around Sergei’s shoulder.

“I love you, too, kiddo.” He whispered, before looking at Isaac with a nervous smirk. Isaac didn’t even begin to feel jealous and laid his head on Jordan’s should to show that. Jordan falling in love with him was something much bigger. Loving Sergei was so simple and easy, and Isaac felt as though he wouldn’t be worth loving if he got jealous over someone sharing affection for his son.

Jordan

As the sun broke through the bedroom window, it highlighted Isaac's eyelashes, making Jordan smile, though he resisted the urge to kiss him. He didn't want to wake his boyfriend, not when he looked so peaceful and calm. For a few moments, Jordan could just watch him and feel as though he had a place in the world. He felt happier simply watching his sleeping man than he ever had before. He knew what he was meant to do with his life: protect Isaac and make him happy. It was a simple mission, but Jordan found such satisfaction in it.

"You know, considering my life at the moment, you'd think that I'd find it terrifying to wake up to you staring at me, but...I can't help but feel like I'm special when you look at me."

Jordan pulled himself from his thoughts to find Isaac looking at him with a grin.

"Good morning, babe." Jordan whispered, leaning over to kiss him.

"Good morning, handsome."

"I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable, it's just...you are so beautiful." Jordan said, making Isaac blush.

"Ah, my morning compliment." Isaac said with a chuckle.

"And my morning blush. I guess we can get the day started."

"But who wants to get up when it's so comfortable in bed next to a burly officer?" Isaac asked, moving his body closer to Jordan.

"Well, I was really looking forward to our date, but I have to admit, I would find myself hard pressed to deny just holding you all day."

Isaac gave him a licentious smile. "Well, it must be early, because can you guess the one word I heard in that entire sentence?" He asked, as he slipped his hand beneath the sheets, sending an electric shock through Jordan when his fingers made contact with his penis.

"Isaac..." Jordan breathed.

"Is this bad?" Isaac asked, his hand hesitating.

“Not bad, just...won’t Sergei be getting up soon? I’d hate for your son to walk in while we’re...you know.”

Isaac withdrew his hand, looking a little down. “He might already be up, and your right. I’m...I’m sorry.”

“Why are you apologizing?”

“For...I don’t know. I’m not trying to be a tease, I swear. I just-.”

“Isaac, if you trust me enough to be more active when it comes to Sergei, trust me when I say that I have absolutely no problems with his presence hindering us from having sex. I’d love to be closer to you in that way, but you have a son, something that I understand.”

Jordan truly wished that he and Isaac could be more intimate, but was more than willing to wait until the opportunity presented itself. They were perfect just the way they were, and Jordan didn’t need to bump uglies with Isaac to see what an amazing man he was, or to know that he wanted to continue spending his life with him.

“You’re very understanding. I find it to be one of your best qualities.”

“Not my debonair wit or my chiseled good looks?” Jordan asked, teasingly.

“Don’t get me wrong, the wit and looks are worth writing home about, but...you’re patient, you understand what it takes to raise a seven year-old, even though you’re new at it.”

“Well, I did have some help. There’s this cute guy, curly hair, striking blue eyes, and kissable lips that raised a fine young man. Whenever I’m unsure how to proceed with Sergei, all I have to do is think: What would that man do?”

“And this man, should I feel threatened by him?” Isaac asked, kissing Jordan’s chest, which was a step forward in confidence for him. When Jordan had first met Isaac, he never would have known that it was him.

“I don’t know...he *is* rather handsome. He’s taking my heat, Isaac, slowly, but surely, and even though there was a time when that would have scared the hell out of me, I’m welcoming it, because it’s him, and I know it will be safe.”

Isaac stopped his ministrations and looked up, the sunlight illuminated his eyes, and he smiled. "That means a lot to me. And...I will always take care of your heart, the way that you've taken care of mine, and taken care of my son."

Notes for the Chapter:

First off, sorry for the shortish chapter, but with how often I'm posting, I'm fluctuating on the length a little bit.

Now, for those who have been following me for awhile, you know that I get restless when I'm only writing one thing at a time. I have all my political stuff, but that's different. I want to get started on another fic. NOT ONE TO POST! Writing two is just too...much, but I want to get started on one so that when this one is finished, there will be no delay in getting it to you. I have several ideas and a few reqs simmering away, and I'm curious what you, the fans, want to read the most. I will get around to doing all these eventually, though. Relevant relationships, themes, and warnings will be included next to the fic so you can make a more informed decision. Here's what I have for you:

Bunnies: A Sterek mpreg story. When Omegas go into heat, they become feral. Every home with an Omega has a 'heat room' in order to keep them contained, but Stiles gets out of his and runs off into the woods. He awakens to find a feral Derek handing him a rabbit, in an Alpha like gesture of his ability to provide, which creeps Stiles out. It's only later that he finds out that he's pregnant with Derek's litter and he has to help civilize Derek. This would be an all werewolf AU.

Unnamed Foreign Order Fic: A Sterek fic. All werewolf AU where Stiles is a foreign order Omega. No Mpreg, but lots of slow relationship building. Stiles would be Russian and Derek would have to prove he's worthy of keeping the headstrong Stiles. I got this idea watching OITNB, so think of Sam Healy and the problems he has with his wife.

Burning Air: An Avatar TLAB/Teen Wolf crossover. I was watching Avatar and found it too perfectly lined up with Teen Wolf characters to not write a fic based on it. Derek is Zuko, Stiles is Aang, Lydia is Katara, and Scott is Sokka. Other characters would fit in eventually. The idea would be to create a Sterek fic out of the situation, ending in Sterek.

The Print: Some werewolf legends say that if you drink rainwater from a werewolf's paw print, you'll turn. This is exactly what happens to Stiles. He has to cope with his new life with the help of Peter and Derek. This fic could go either way, either Steter or Sterek.

Wipe Away the Debt: A Bioshock: Infinite/ Teen Wolf crossover. Derek is fifty thousand dollars in debt to some people you wouldn't want to owe a nickel to. They tell him that if he can bring them 'The Spark' they'll forgive his debts and even give him a little extra to rebuild his life with. For those who have played the games, this won't be exactly like it, it will just share a few similarities. It will end up being Sterek, though there will be some betrayal along the way.

The Movie prequel.

I have the idea for a pack mate fic where Stiles is the mate of Derek, Jackson, Scott, Peter, and Isaac, but...I'm iffy on it.

and finally:

Brought Light to My Darkness: A Stackson fic. Stiles is blind and has just moved to Beacon Hills where he catches the eye of the cocky Jackson. Stiles isn't the type to simply lay down and accept a protector and Jackson can't rely on his good looks to get the man that he likes.

Excluding the death fic (the Movie prequel) all of these will endgame with the pairings mentioned, if I wanted to see Stiles end up without Derek/Jackson/Peter, I'd watch the show.

Let me know what you want, and if anyone has any reqs, I can take them into consideration. I really only like writing slash, as my het knowledge is...less than adequate.

46. A Date Interrupted

Summary for the Chapter:

Sergei gets sick, leading to a trip to the hospital.

Isaac

“What’s wrong, Seryozha?” Isaac asked as he watched Sergei poke at his cereal.

“My zhivotik hurts, papa.” Sergei said with a moan.

“His what?” Jordan asked around a mouthful of Pop-Tart.

“His stomach.” Isaac said, moving forward to check Sergei for a fever. He had never been very good at checking his son for a raised temperature, and his latest attempt didn’t make him feel any better. Sergei’s forehead felt normal, but that didn’t reassure him.

“When did it start hurting?” Jordan asked, the concern in his voice reassuring to Isaac.

“This morning.” Sergei replied.

“I’m going to give you some Pepto, okay?” Jordan said, causing Sergei to make a face.

“Papa, is that the gross, pink stuff?”

“Yes, son, but it will make you feel better.” Isaac said, kissing the side of his head.

Isaac watched proudly as Jordan came back from the bathroom, reading the side of the bottle.

“He’s not allergic, right?” He asked Isaac, quietly.

Isaac chuckled and shook his head. The concern that Jordan was showing over a stomachache was impressive, causing Isaac to smile.

Sergei drank his medicine, though with a shudder indicating that he was not too pleased with it.

“Give it a few minutes to work, if you still feel sick, make sure to let me know, okay?” Jordan asked, and Sergei nodded.

“We can cancel today, if you want.” Jordan offered.

Isaac considered that option. There was the possibility that Sergei could be seriously ill. It was the job of a father to worry about everything that his son did. If Sergei coughed or rubbed his nose, or winced, Isaac wanted to stop the world, and make sure that he was alright.

“Sergei, do you want to stay home today?” Isaac asked, making the choice Sergei’s.

“I want to go with Jordan. It’s just a little bellyache, papa.”

“He’s free from my worries.” Isaac said. “I think we should try it out.”

Sergei clapped his hands and began to eat, not cringing when he swallowed, which was very reassuring to Isaac.

He told himself that it was just a stomachache. There was such a thing as too much worrying, and Isaac was already an expert on that level of parenting. If he could accept that Sergei needed to get out of the house despite a stalker, he could allow himself and his son a day with Jordan, even though his son had a slight stomachache.

“Jordan’s right, though. If you feel sick, you need to let us know, okay?”

Sergei nodded. “I promise, papa.”

“You’re still not telling me where we’re going, are you?” Isaac asked Jordan, who smirked and shook his head.

“You really have problems with the concept of a surprise, don’t you?”

“It’s a flaw, but would you have me any other way?”

“Nope, you’re perfect just the way you are.” Jordan said, kissing Isaac on the temple. “Sergei, are you sure that you’re up for going?”

“I feel better now. I want to go with you and papa.” Sergei said with a tinge of irritation in his voice. It reminded Isaac of himself.

“Alright, alright, well, if you’re sure you’re up for it...do you want to take a shower so we can get going?” It was assertive, but still a question.

Sergei nodded and got up from his spot, Isaac expected him to head for the hallway, but he didn’t move.

“Papa, my mouth is wet.” He said, before he lurched forward and vomited his breakfast out over the kitchen floor. Panic rose in Isaac as he rushed forward to rub Sergei’s back. He could feel his son’s back tense as another upchuck hit him.

“It’s alright, son, just get it all out.” Isaac whispered as he watched Jordan run from the room, returning a moment later with a bucket and washcloth.

Another tremor when through Sergei’s body, but nothing came with it except a sob.

“Jordan, wet a paper towel?” Isaac asked, holding out his hand. Jordan did as Isaac asked, and Isaac used it to wipe off Sergei’s mouth, using his own shirt to get the tears.

“It’s okay, kid.”

“I’m sorry, papa.” Sergei whined, but Isaac shook his head, and pulled his son in for a tight hug.

“No, Seryozha, you don’t have to apologize.”

“Papa, it hurts.”

“I know, throwing up hurts, but it feels better now that it’s out, doesn’t it?”

Sergei shook his head. “No, papa, my stomach hurts.”

Isaac met Jordan’s eyes which softened as he nodded.

“We’re going to take you to the hospital, kiddo, okay?” Jordan said, grabbing his keys from the table, while Isaac picked up his son, giving Jordan a grateful look.

“Hey, guys, what’s wrong?” Stiles asked, poking his head out from the hallway

“Sergei’s sick, we’re going to take him to the hospital. There’s...uh...in the kitchen. I’ll get it when we get back.”

Stiles didn’t he look at the mess, he shook his head, his face furrowed in concern. “Isaac, seriously? Leave it. I’ll get it, and Derek, and I will meet you at the hospital.” He reached out and ruffled Sergei’s hair, before turning back to the bedroom.

“Thanks!” Isaac called out, before taking Sergei out the door towards Jordan’s car. “I’m sitting in the back with him.” He told Jordan, before looking down at his son. “Sergei, do you think you could tell me if you need to throw up, again, so we can pull over?”

Sergei nodded, but Jordan spoke first. “Don’t worry about it, let’s just get him there.”

Jordan seemed torn between wanting to get there as fast as possible and wanting to obey the speed limit, if only for the wellbeing of all in the car.

“Papa, why does it hurt so badly?”

“I don’t know, Sergei, but we’re going to find out.” Isaac vowed. It was his worst fear. Beyond even the stalker doing something to harm his son, which wasn’t real possibility with Jordan around, Isaac was helpless against the microbes and germs that could hurt his son. He couldn’t fight illness, he couldn’t shoot nausea, and it all left him feeling so hopeless. When all he could do was stroke his son’s hair, it didn’t feel like it was enough.

Even beyond that, there was guilt, because he had once put Sergei through the same thing. He had lied, which had made everything worse, but just the fact that he had been sick, and that Sergei had had no way of helping him, made Isaac feel dizzy with guilt.

“Ya izvinyayus', syn.” (I'm sorry, son) Isaac whispered, holding back the threat of tears. He couldn’t cry, not in front of Sergei who had to be feeling vulnerable

and scared. He would have a breakdown, but it wouldn't be in front of his son.

"We're here, babe." Jordan said, pulling into the drive-through for the emergency room. "I'm going to park the car, and I'll be back with you in five minutes, I promise." He said.

Isaac didn't pause to give Jordan a kiss or thank him, promising himself to do so when Jordan returned. He took Sergei and entered the hospital, heading straight for the desk where he saw Melissa talking to the receptionist. She looked up as he approached, her face falling when she saw Sergei.

"Isaac, what's wrong?"

"I don't know." Isaac said, feeling only the slightest relief at knowing that they were in the place that could help Sergei. "He...he said his stomach hurt, I gave him some Pepto, and he was fine for five minutes, and then, when he got up, he threw up. He says the pain is really bad."

Melissa didn't smile or give him any signs of encouragement, which made Isaac's blood freeze. She came from behind the partition, calling for a doctor and a stretcher as she did so.

"Isaac, I'm going to take him back, and have him looked at."

Isaac nodded and placed his son on the stretcher when it arrived, moving to go with his son, but Melissa held her arm out.

"Isaac, you can't go."

Four words ripped Isaac's heart from his chest. They broke him, shattered any sense of safety the hospital might have brought.

"No." Isaac whispered, though it quickly turned into a shout. "No, you can't. He's my son, he needs me!"

"Yes, he needs you to stay here, because even for you, Isaac, I cannot bend the laws of this hospital. Once I know *anything*, I will come and let you know."

Isaac hadn't even felt the tears come, despite his resolve not to cry in front of Sergei, they fell. He let out a sob while Melissa stared at him with a sympathetic

look. A pained whimper from Sergei made Isaac come to terms with that had to happen. He had to be parted from his son, and the longer he stood crying about, the longer it would take for Sergei to get treatment.

“Hey, kid.” Isaac said, wiping the tears from his eyes as he looked down at the one thing he loved more than anything.

“Papa, it hurts.”

“I know, baby, I know. These very nice people are going to take you to figure out what’s wrong, okay?”

Sergei, even in his pain, picked up the implication of Isaac’s words. “You’re not coming?” He asked, sounding frightened.

“I can’t, son. And I’m so sorry for that, but I have to stay here, while they make sure that you’re okay.”

“Papa, ne ostavlyay menya. (Papa, don't leave me.)” Sergei whined, tears falling down his cheeks. “Pozhaluysta, ne pokiday menya. (Please, don't leave me.)”

“Mne zhal', Sergei, no oni ne pozvolyayut mne idti. (I'm sorry, Sergei, but they won't let me go.)”

“Isaac.” Melissa said, placing a hand on his shoulder.

“I love you, Sergei, and I’ll see you soon.” Isaac whispered as he kissed his son’s forehead. “And I’ll be right here when you get out.”

Even his words in Russian had not soothed, Sergei, though he called out for Isaac as the doctor wheeled him away, and Isaac felt as though they were wheeling apart a vital organ of his or his soul, because Sergei was just as important to him, and it was causing him physical pain to not respond when Sergei was calling for him.

Isaac couldn’t, he needed to be by his son. They could sedate and drag him out if they had to, but he wasn’t going to leave Sergei all alone, afraid, and in pain. As he moved to go forward, though, another hand appeared on his shoulder.

“Isaac, he’ll be alright.” Jordan’s voice was in his ear, and Isaac turned to

collapse into his arms, crying with abandon.

“They took him from me, Jordan. They just...took him.”

“To make him better. And it will only be for a little bit, and then you’ll be allowed to go and see him.”

“I don’t...I don’t want logic, Jordan! He’s my...he’s everything. He’s my son, and they just-.”

“Hey.” Jordan kissed him. “Hey.” Another kiss. “Hey, it’s going to be alright. He’s going to be alright.”

“I can’t...Jordan, without him...I can’t live without him.”

“I know, and you won’t have to. They’re going to make sure that he’s healthy, they’re going to fix him up, and you’re going to have him in your arms again.”

Jordan rubbed his back, keeping him grounded, until he could breathe.

“I’m sorry.” He whispered, feeling a little embarrassed.

“You love Sergei, and they took him. The very first thing that I learned about you was that you liked to keep him close.”

“It...it was him calling me...I let them take him, he’s...he’s scared, Jordan. I should be there with him.”

“Hey, guys.” Isaac looked up at Stiles’ voice and managed to force a small smile on his face. Derek looked at Isaac, and moved forward.

“He’s not...?” He began, his breath hitching, when Isaac realized that Derek had mistaken his tears for ones of grief.

“No, he’s...they took him, I’m...just...I don’t do well when he’s taken away from me.”

Derek let out a sigh of relief and grabbed Isaac in a surprising, but welcome hug. When Derek pulled back, Stiles gave him a hug as well, though when he let go, Isaac felt himself gravitate back to Jordan. He appreciated Derek and Stiles

coming to be with him but he relied on Jordan. If he had been alone, Isaac was sure that he would have broken down. As it was, he could feel himself on the edge of a panic attack, and only Jordan's arms was keeping it at bay.

Notes for the Chapter:

So, the Stackson fic won. That's what will be next, and I've already started typing it up.

Edit: So, I lied. I'm sorry. I will write the Stackson fic after I do Bunnies, but I need to do some research, first. When I wrote Perfect, I was taking an ASL class and had some help developing a character without speech or hearing, I don't have that luxury in writing a blind character. I would really hate to misrepresent or be offensive in my writing, and so I'm going to put it on hold until I can do some more research. I like my writing to be the best that it can be, and that means more than just writing hot sex scenes or fun plots, it means making sure that my characters aren't stereotypes or misrepresentations. I hope you guys forgive me for getting your hopes up, but do not fear! The story is coming, it's just going to take a little time.

47. The First

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac finds out what is wrong with Sergei, and Jordan shares some special words.

Isaac

Isaac hated waiting. It had been four hours and the only words that he had received were appeals to his patience. Isaac didn't let that deter him, though, he still got up every fifteen minutes and pressed for information.

"The doctor is still giving him a checkup, but he's taken some painkillers and seems to be really responding to them." Marsha, the receptionist told him when he approached the desk.

"Thank you." Isaac whispered, without inflection. It was news, and it was apparently good, but he couldn't bring himself to care without being able to see his son with his own eyes.

"Babe, how about some food?" Jordan offered when he got back to the waiting area where Derek and Stiles remained with Isaac and Jordan, dutifully.

"Don't leave me?" Isaac begged. He was quite aware of how pathetic it was, but Jordan didn't admonish or berate him.

"Of course."

"I'll go get you something." Stiles said, getting up from his spot. "Der, stay here and text me if something happens."

"Could you get him some candy or something? I want him...he should be happy when he gets out." Isaac said, and Stiles nodded with a soft smile.

"He's always been...I mean, I'd swear that his immune system knew that we were poor." Isaac said needing to speak so that he could focus on anything other than the fact that his son was sick and he couldn't do anything about it. "He got chickenpox when he was three, but other than that...everything could be taken

care of with chicken soup and some tender care.”

“Isaac, it’s...whatever it is, I’m sure that he’ll get better. I had...a lot of siblings, before...” Derek swallowed. “Before Peter, and they got sick sometimes, I took my fair share of trips to the hospital. Even the kids with impeccable immune records get sick.”

“He’s...he’s in pain and alone, Derek. Anything could be wrong with him, *anything*, and-.”

“You feel helpless.” Derek made it a statement, rather than a question. “Isaac, I know how that feels. But Sergei’s going to be fine.” He paused. “He has to be.” He whispered, sounding as though he was convincing himself as much as Isaac.

“He *will* be.” Isaac’s head snapped up to see Melissa standing before them, he hadn’t even heard her come up, but he threw himself out of Jordan’s arms to speak with her. The fact that she wasn’t smiling completely destroyed any good feelings her words had brought him.

“What’s wrong with him?”

“We did some bloodwork and gave him some morphine to help him cope with the pain. His results have just come back, and it looks like he has appendicitis.”

Isaac knew about inflamed appendixes, he knew that once they burst there was a serious risk of death. He felt himself slide back down into the chair next to Jordan, but lost all of his senses after that. There was a fear that he had had when he didn’t know what was happening to Sergei, but knowing that his son had a ticking infection bomb in his gut was something so much worse.

The light in his tunnel of darkness, the thing that stopped him from falling back into a panic attack was once again, Jordan.

“Come back to me, babe, please.”

Isaac took in deep gulping breaths while he tried to stabilize himself.

“Isaac, I realize how this must feel to you, but you need to understand that he is going to be fine.” Melissa said as her face swam back into view.

“It...It...It can-.” Isaac began, but she cut him off.

“Yes, *can*, if the child isn’t brought in for treatment right away.” Melissa put her hand on his shoulder. “Sergei is here, he’ll go into surgery, and he will be fine. Not a single child that I can think of has died from appendicitis at the hospital.”

“When can I see him?” Isaac asked. It wasn’t as though he could simply trust Melissa, not when it came to Sergei. If he himself had been ill, he would accept the word of the nurse, but for his son, he needed to verify that he was okay.

“We’re prepping a room for him, now. It’s...” She let out a sigh. “Isaac, I’m not supposed to let you see him pre-surgery,” Isaac’s heart dropped, he didn’t know how much longer he could go, but Melissa looked around and lowered her voice before continuing, “but I suppose if you snuck back there, there’s nothing that I could do to stop it. He’s in room twenty-four”

She shook her head and gave Isaac a sympathetic smile. “So, I’m sorry Mr. Lahey, but you will have to wait here while I give these files to the doctor.”

With a wink, she turned away and headed towards the receptionist, blocking her view.

“Derek, let Stiles know, come on, babe.” Jordan said, pulling on Isaac’s arm, leading him towards the back of the room. Isaac was still in a little bit of a daze, unable to process his gratitude to Melissa for ensuring that he would be able to see Sergei, again.

The moment they crossed through the door to the main wing, Isaac was hit with the smell of sterilized illness, and he immediately associated the scent with the terrible churning in his gut.

“Isn’t this...less than legal?” He asked, surprised that Jordan was so eager to subvert the rules that the hospital had laid down.

“It’s Seryozha.” Jordan said, simply.

Despite the circumstances, Isaac couldn’t help but smile. Jordan had been his comfort during the entire ordeal, and Isaac realized that without Jordan, he probably wouldn’t have been able to stay sane long enough to get through the day.

“Here.” Jordan said, stopping at the room. “Do you want to...be alone?” Jordan actually sounded worried, and Isaac clenched his hand tighter. Even if he wanted to see Sergei alone, he couldn’t have told Jordan to leave. Jordan was more than just worried for Isaac, he was worried for his son, and that was something that Isaac realized made him a superman of sorts. Isaac was crumbling, barely hanging on, and yet, even though Jordan obviously cared a great deal, he was managing to keep his composure.

“I need you.” Isaac replied, and Jordan nodded, his face turning up slightly in a smile.

They entered the room, and the first thing Isaac heard was the only thing at that point that could make him let go of Jordan’s hand.

“Papa!”

Isaac dropped Jordan’s hand and ran to his son’s bedside. It wasn’t nearly as bad as he had imagined: Sergei was awake, and smiling, and there was only one I.V. in his arm. It didn’t stop Isaac from sobbing when he saw him, but they were more relieved and happy tears than ones of sadness. It hurt to see his son in a hospital room, but he felt so much better being by his side, not having to worry if Sergei was in pain or crying out for him.

“Papa, why are you crying?” Sergei’s voice had a slur to it that made Isaac worried for a moment, before he remembered that they had given him morphine.

“I was...oh, son, I had to leave you and I’m so sorry.” Isaac said, kissing his son’s hand.

“Ms. Melissa told me what happened and why you couldn’t come with me, papa. She also gave me a lollipop and told me I was a big boy.”

“You are, Sergei. You’re my little man, you’ve been so brave.”

Sergei patted his cheek, the drugs in his system making him much less anxious, something Isaac was grateful for. To know that Sergei was not fraught with a good thing. The less his son panicked, the better.

“Hi, Jordan.” Sergei said turning to the officer.

“Hey, kiddo. I’m...I’m sorry that I don’t have Skittles this time, but they probably won’t let you eat them, anyway.” Jordan’s voice wavered a little, which was something that surprised Isaac.

“My stomach still feels funny, but I can have some when we go home, right?”

“Sergei, when we get home, you can have anything you want. You’re so brave.” Isaac said.

“When can we go home, am I still sick?”

“You are, but they’re...the doctor’s going to come in, and he’s going to make you better.” Isaac said, the tears returning to his eyes. He wasn’t sure how he was going to explain surgery to his son without breaking down.

“Like they made you better?”

“Yes, son, but...what you have is different than what I had.”

“How?” Sergei asked, sounding so innocent.

Isaac opened his mouth to respond, but only achieved a sob. It wasn’t fair. His son was perfect and didn’t deserve to go through the horrors of surgery.

“The doctor will give you some more medicine.” Jordan said, his hand came down to rest on Isaac’s shoulder, giving him the strength to look up. “It will make you sleepy, and when you wake up, you’re going to be all better.”

“But I could just sleep at home.” Sergei said.

“The...you could, but...” Jordan while Isaac nodded at him encouragingly. “The doctor’s going to do a little surgery to make you better.”

“Papa, chto zhe ‘surgery’ v vidu?” (Papa, what does surgery mean?)

“The doctor...he’s going to...he’s going to go into your body to take out what’s making you sick.”

Sergei shook his head. “I don’t want him to, papa, I want you to. Can’t you make me feel better?”

Isaac shook as fresh sobs escaped him. There was no desperation in Sergei's voice, the drugs had made him mellow, but he still wanted Isaac to do something that was impossible.

"He can't, kiddo. Only trained doctors can do that." Jordan explained. "They went to school for it. Your papa is making you feel better, by brining you here."

"Thank you, papa." Sergei whispered. Isaac opened his mouth to respond, but the door opened, and a stern male voice spoke, instead.

"What are you doing here?"

"He's visiting with his son before a surgery." Jordan snapped. "Try showing a little respect for a father."

"I meant no disrespect, but I have a job to do, and in order to do that job, I need you two to leave."

"Papa, do you have to leave?" Sergei asked, and Isaac nodded.

"I do, son, but I promise to be here when you wake up." Isaac said, running his hand over Sergei's hair. "Just go to sleep, buddy, and when you wake you, you're going to be all better."

"Ice cream." Sergei said, closing his eyes. "I want ice cream."

The doctor cleared his throat pointedly, but Isaac gave Sergei one more kiss on the forehead, before getting up.

"If anything happens to my son under your watch, I will make you wish you had chosen to be a janitor instead of a doctor." He growled in the man's face.

The doctor looked nervous and with a swallow said, "You don't have to threaten me-."

"I'm an officer of the law, I didn't hear anything that sounded like a threat." Jordan said, taking Isaac's hand and leading him from the room.

"That was absolutely a threat and I wasn't done." Isaac said with a pout as he was led away. He was angry, he was hurting, and ensuring that the doctor would

do his job would make him feel better for having left his son.

“Babe, there’s a limit to the amount of law breaking that I can see in front of me. Besides, it’s best to leave mysteriously, it gives off a better impact.”

“I just...I have to know that he’ll be alright.” Isaac whispered. “I don’t care if I have to break the law to do it, but...to that doctor, Sergei’s just another patient, but to me...I mean, I love you Jordan, I do, but Sergei is everything to me.”

Jordan didn’t say anything, his expression was one of shock, which frightened Isaac.

“Are...are you alright?”

“You just said that you love me.” Jordan whispered.

Isaac let out a chuckle as he realized that he had and he had meant it. He loved Jordan. The man was everything he could have hoped for in a boyfriend, and seeing his reaction to Sergei’s illness must have made him come to terms with that fact that he loved him.

“I’m...I do, but...if it’s-.”

Jordan moved forward and kissed him, silencing him. There was no tongue, but it was the deepest kiss they had ever shared. All of Isaac’s worries and tension momentarily left his body as Jordan wrapped himself around Isaac.

“I love you, too, Isaac. I love you and Sergei, and I don’t even want you to think for a moment that you telling me is a step too far.”

It was the oddest moment for them to be sharing it, but Isaac held onto it because it was true and it helped him to cope with the terror he had in regards to Sergei.

Notes for the Chapter:

So, I mentioned to someone that the security situation for our guys would be addressed this chapter, it's actually in the next one. I didn't just forget that they have a stalker.

Working on two fics and school...things might get tight in regards to time,

but as always, I promise to never orphan or abandon this fic. Thank you all so much. :)

48. I Walk With Heroes

Summary for the Chapter:

The rest of the group arrives

Isaac

Isaac sat next to Jordan, holding his hand, and staring at the chicken pot pie that Stiles had brought him from the vending machine.

“You really should eat, man.” Stiles said, his mouth full of a Snickers bar. “It won’t do anyone any good if you pass out from hunger.”

“Please, eat something?” Derek urged.

“I don’t know if I trust a pot pie from a vending machine.” Isaac said, even though he took a bite. It was mostly salt, though it wasn’t terrible. “I mean... there’s just something about meat from a machine that seems...off.”

“I can get you something else. They had a bunch of candy, I just thought you’d want something with more substance. There was pretzels.” Stiles said, but Isaac shook his head.

“This will be fine. I...I’m not really hungry.” He was eating so they didn’t worry about him, not because his body was telling him to.

“Well, that’s a shame.” A deep voice caused Isaac to look up, and he smiled when he saw the sheriff. He was holding a bag from Burger King and was still in his uniform.

“Dyadya.” He said, getting up and embracing the man.

“I’m sorry, moy plemynnik. I wanted to get here sooner, but-.”

“Don’t worry about it, I’m just glad that you’re here now. It means a lot that you came down here.”

“My grand-nephew is in the hospital and you didn’t think that I’d come?”

“I figured you would, but...” Isaac paused, a thought catching in his brain.

“Babe, what’s wrong?” Jordan asked, moving closer.

“We’re exposed.” He whispered, turning to Jordan. It hadn’t been a thought until he had seen John in his uniform that he had realized how exposed they were.

John shook his head, though. “The moment Stiles texted me where you were, I sent Matt and Tara. Greenburg’s out there, now.”

“You’re pretty awesome, you know?” Isaac said, letting out a relieved chuckle.

“I have been accused of being so.” John said with a smile, though it fell when his eyes slid to Jordan. Isaac’s smile disappeared as well, when he looked at his boyfriend’s devastated face.

“What’s wrong, vydrachka?”

“I forgot.” He whispered. “It’s...I’m supposed...I’m supposed to protect you, and-.”

“Jordan Parrish, if you say that you failed me, I swear to God, I will leave you. You were here for me. You kept me stable. I saw you, Jordan, you cried when you saw my son in the bed.” Isaac said, pointing towards the door where his son was being operated on. “You were worried about Sergei, and even I forgot for a moment that that freak is watching us, so just...don’t, okay?”

Jordan looked at Isaac as though he was going to argue for a moment, before he let out a sigh, and nodded. He pressed a kiss to Isaac’s head.

“I’m still sorry, okay? You can’t leave me for that.”

“You’re probably safe here, anyway.” John said. “No one is going mess with you in such a public place, and it’s not like anyone can do anything to Sergei while he’s in surgery.”

“What kind of sick world is it where my son is safer in surgery than he is out here?” Isaac asked, though he was mostly speaking to himself.

“There’s terrible things out there, babe, but we’re going to keep you safe, even if

I...forgot for a moment.”

“Handsome man saves me.” Isaac said, quoting a favorite show of his.

“Always, babe, always.”

“So, I sincerely hope that you were kidding about not being hungry, because I’d hate to have gotten this for nothing.” John said, holding up the bag, which Isaac took with a grateful smile.

“Thank you, dyadya.” Isaac said, smiling.

After Isaac ate, Scott, Allison, Jackson, and Lydia all joined them, though Jackson was in less than a good mood.

“What’s wrong?” Isaac asked after giving Allison a hug.

“You could have told us.” Jackson said, irritation in his voice.

“I could have told you...?” Isaac was confused.

“That he was here. I had to find out from Scott, who only heard about it from his mom.”

Isaac was touched and even felt a little guilty that he hadn’t thought about calling his friends.

“I’m...I’m sorry, I just...I was panicking, you know?”

“I told him that.” Lydia said, pulling Jackson away. “A father whose son is ill isn’t going to be thinking about anything else.”

“Stiles could have told us, then. You guys aren’t the only ones who care about him.”

“It *would* have been nice to know.” Allison agreed while Scott nodded.

Isaac let out a chuffed laugh. He had seen Stiles, Derek, and Jordan as his extended family, and had not given much thought to the others in that regard. But Sergei was so loveable, and it was only natural that others would come to care for him, too.

“I’m sorry, guys, I...I should have let you know, but Lydia’s right. I mean...if I wasn’t living with Stiles, he probably wouldn’t even know, right now. All I could think about was him, and getting him to a hospital.”

“Which is natural, babe. Maybe people should think about what it was like for you and back off.” Jordan said, his voice low and edged with malice. Isaac leaned against him and ran a hand down his arm to calm him down.

“Don’t be mad at them.”

“He’s not being fair!” Jordan argued.

“No, but it’s because he was worried about Sergei. I can’t fault him for that.” Isaac said. It might have been the shock, he knew that Jackson’s attitude would have normally made him angry, but it was care. Jordan showed it by being strong, Stiles and Derek showed it by making sure he was fed, and Jackson showed it through anger.

“He’s right, I shouldn’t have snapped, but...we worry, too.”

“I know.” Isaac said, pulling Jackson into a hug. “And thank you.”

“So, how long has he been in there?” Scott asked, scratching at his arm, nervously.

Isaac didn’t even have to look at the clock. “Forty-eight minutes.”

Scott nodded. “I don’t know if they told you...but a laparoscopic appendectomy only takes about two hours. That’s...not too long.”

“Two hours is an eternity.” Isaac whispered. “I just...want him back in my arms, I want to see him.”

“I know, but despite the fact that this is a small town, and even if they aren’t yours, he’s still in good hands. Melissa will make sure that everything goes alright.” Allison said, trying to smile, but it came out as more of a grimace.

“I know that he will be, but...fuck, I don’t even know if I can explain it. Knowing doesn’t make it better.” Isaac said.

“I know, we’re not parents, but-.”

“It’s not even a parental thing. This is more of a Lahey thing. Jordan said that we were lone wolves, and before I came back, and reconnected with you guys...we were. If...If I had had more money, maybe things would have turned out differently, but we were all each other had. So, we’re pretty dependent on one another.”

“And you’re going to continue to be dependent on one another. Nothing’s going to happen to him, Isaac.” John said, putting a hand on his shoulder.

No one seemed to be able to distract themselves. No one pulled out their cellphones or talked, they sat, occasionally watching the clock, but sitting in silence, waiting for any news to come from the back.

Scott ended up being wrong. It was only an hour a sixteen minutes after the doctor kicked Isaac out of Sergei’s room that Melissa came back, this time with a smile on her face.

“Well, that is one lucky boy, to have a waiting party like-.”

“How is he?” Isaac asked, cutting her off.

Melissa chuckled. “He’s fine. He’s still sleeping from the anesthesia, but he came through with flying colors.”

“No...No complications?” Isaac asked, feeling something akin to happiness blossoming in his chest, though he was still wary of any problems the surgery might have brought with it.

“Absolutely no complications. The surgery is actually very simple, we went in laparoscopically, through three incisions, here, here, and here.” She explained, touching two spots on Isaac’s torso and his belly button. “It will leave the barest scar, and by the time he’s in high school, even that will have faded.”

“Can I see him?”

Melissa nodded. “You can, I promise but there’s just a few things that we need to talk about first, okay?”

Isaac really didn't want to talk, he wanted to see his son, but knowing that Serge was going to be alright, steeled him to sit and listen to whatever Melissa had to say.

"He'll be sore for a few days, if he was an adult we'd warn against heavy lifting, but under the circumstances, we'll just stick to warning him against too much playing. He's going to have to stay in bed for the next few days while we run some tests, but-."

"You're going to keep him?" Isaac interrupted as his stomach knotted, again.

"We are, but obviously, we could never ask you to leave."

"You made me leave-."

"When we were trying to find out what was wrong and operate. He's in recovery now, you can stay with him until he goes home."

Isaac let out a breath of relief. "Thank you."

"Of course." She said, and then continued as though she hadn't been interrupted. "We can keep the I.V. in until he leaves, but you'll still need to make sure he keeps his fluids up."

Isaac nodded, willing to agree to anything, even giving up his own soul, if it just meant he could see his son, again.

"The aftercare of the wound...can be taken care of later." She said, watching Isaac jittering in place. "We'll keep an eye on it until he goes home. I'll let you all in for now, but at the end of the day, we can only allow two people to stay."

"We can wait out here, if you want." Isaac turned around to see Stiles, looking eager, but determined. Oddly, Jackson was missing, though Isaac assumed that he'd gone to the bathroom or something.

"No, I know that he'll be happy to see you guys, just...someone should stay behind to let Jackson know which room?" He ended his sentence in a question to make it more of a request, though the whole thing turned out pointless, when Jackson returned through the front doors, carrying a large, cardboard box.

“No need to wait for me. Just had to grab this from the car.” He said, though his mouth was obscured by the box.

“Uh...take-out?” Stiles asked.

“No, Stillinski, it’s for Sergei, we all got him something.”

Isaac was curious, but so much more desperate to see his son. Melissa led them through the hallways to a different room than Sergei had been in, earlier. Isaac wasted no time in rushing to his son’s side, and taking his hand. As Melissa had said, Sergei was asleep, and perhaps that was for the better. Isaac had just needed the physical contact, to see and feel that Sergei was okay, but if his son was free of pain while he was asleep, then Isaac could live with that.

“I knew he’d be alright.” Jordan whispered, though there was a catch in his voice that spoke otherwise.

“You Lahey boys are tough.” Stiles said, clapping Isaac on the back.

Isaac heard him and smiled, but he only had eyes for his son.

“I really want to thank you all for coming, it means a lot to me, and I know that he’ll appreciate it.” Isaac said, though he still didn’t turn around.

“Anything for you two.” Derek said.

It was those words that Caused Isaac to break eye contact with his son and turn to the group. Everyone was standing around the bed, except for Jackson who was unloading what looked like a store’s worth of candy and cookie bouquets, stuffed animals, and a few action figures. They were all here because they cared, and that was something to be happy about. An extended family for his son to feel safe and protected under.

Notes for the Chapter:

So, Jackson was a little mean, but it was only because he cares about Sergei.

Chapter title and the quote that Isaac uses are from Angel.

And I told you that Isaac didn't go without protection. I don't think that it's ridiculous to think that Jordan forgot while he was worried about Sergei.

49. Pew Pew Pew

Summary for the Chapter:

Sergei is still in the hospital.

“Papa?” Sergei’s voice broke something terrible in Isaac. Some fear that he had kept buried deep within him that Sergei wouldn’t come through alright. It all was banished the moment he heard Sergei speak to him.

“Hey, son, how are you feeling?”

Sergei didn’t answer directly, he looked around at the congregated group, and the gifts, which made his eyes lighten up. “I feel good enough for candy, papa.”

“And Sergei, I promise, in a little while, I’m going to let you pig out on as much candy and ice cream that you can eat, but for right now, you can’t. The doctor won’t let you have anything until we can be sure that you won’t get sick from it.”

Sergei reached his hand out and placed it against Isaac’s face. “I missed you, papa.”

“I missed you, too, son. I’m so sorry that I had to leave you.”

“You told me why and the doctor made me better, right?”

“He did, you’re...you have to stay for a few more days, but that’s just so that they can make sure that you’re okay.”

“But I don’t want you to leave again, papa.” Sergei whined, though Isaac didn’t have to feel bad about it, because he wouldn’t be parted from his son for a while.

“I’m not leaving, Seryozha. I’m going to stay right here until you can come home, and then, I’m going to stay right by you there, too.”

“I don’t have to go more surgeries, do I?”

“No, kiddo, you’re done with surgeries for now.” Jordan said.

“Good, I don’t like them, my tummy feels funny.”

“It will for a little while, but it’s going to get better.” Jackson said, stepping forward, and looking at Isaac for approval. Isaac nodded, he trusted his friends to never cause harm to Sergei either physically or emotionally. “We’re all really glad to see you.”

“I’m happy to see you, too, you’re my friends.”

“We are, and we brought you a bunch of goodies to eat when you’re allowed to.”

“But I can play with the toys now, right?” Sergei asked, moving to get up, Isaac felt his heart clench, though it was Jordan who put a hand to his chest to keep him down.

“You have to get up carefully, kiddo, it could hurt if you do it too fast.”

“Why don’t you tell me which toy you want, and I’ll bring it to you?” Allison offered.

“The dinosaur, and the bird, and the-.”

“Just bring all of them Allison.” Isaac said with a chuckle.

Allison complied and scooped all the stuffed animals and action figures before dumping them on Sergei’s bed.

“Thank you.” Sergei said, as he reached out for the stuffed velociraptor.

“You’re welcome.” Scott said. “It’s from *Jurassic World*, have you seen it?”

“Papa won’t let me see the dinosaur movie, he says it’s too scary.” Sergei said, shaking his head.

“You can watch it when we get home, son. I promise, anything you want.” Isaac said.

“Kids like dinosaurs, anyway, right?” Scott asked, hopefully.

Isaac laughed. “Look at him, man.” He said pointing to Sergei, who was prancing the prehistoric creature across the bed. “He likes it. Thank you. It’s...

this is probably more than he's gotten for every birthday and Christmas combined."

Scott's face fell. "I swear, I wasn't trying to show you up or anything, I just... they bought him candy, and I always thought it was better to have something practical, and-."

"Dude, you made Sergei smile, so chill out." Isaac said, bumping his shoulder. "That's never a crime in my book."

Scott poked his index fingers together. "I got you something, too." He said, reaching into his back pocket, and pulling out a video game: *The Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time*.

"I wasn't sure if you had a 3DS or not."

"Thanks, man. Uh...Stiles does, I can use his, and this is...thank you." Isaac said, grateful and touched that Scott had thought of him.

"Like I said...candy only works so much, practical gifts are better."

"Papa, are you leaving?" Sergei asked with a tone of voice that made Isaac rush to his side.

"Sergei, I'm not leaving, I promise. Scott and I were just talking."

"Play dinosaurs with me, papa."

Isaac picked up an Iron Man action figure and made it fly away from the raptor, though he kept a close eye on how energetic Sergei was. The bed wasn't big enough for all of them to play together, but Scott and Stiles joined them. It seemed right. Of the entire group, Stiles and Scott were the most childlike in their attitude, and Isaac would behave like any age if it made Sergei happy.

It was two hours later -after Sergei had even gotten Jackson to say 'pew pew pew'- when Melissa came back into the room to check on Sergei and kick everyone out.

"Do they have to go, Miss Melissa? We were having fun."

“I’m afraid so, Sergei.” Melissa said, taking his temperature, her smile a sign that Sergei was doing alright.

“But, mom-.” Scott began, though he shut his mouth when she turned to him with sharp glare.

“Don’t ‘mom’ me. I’ve been working here since you were his age.” She said, motioning to Sergei with her pen as she updated his chart. “You know the rules.”

“Can you guys come back, tomorrow, though?” Sergei asked, looking hopeful.

“Absolutely, kid. Me and Allison will-.”

“Allison and I.” Stiles corrected with a smirk.

Scott rolled his eyes. “Me and Allison,” he said, defiantly, “will be here as soon as they open. It’s the weekend so we don’t have to work.” He ruffled Sergei’s hair.

“And if your papa says it’s okay, we’ll be here, too.” Jackson said. “But I’m not going to invite myself, because that would be rude.”

Scott stuck his tongue out at Jackson, making Sergei laugh.

“Having Sergei’s family around will help him get better faster, of course you can come, Jackson.”

Jackson smiled at him and pulled him into a hug. “I’m sorry I snapped, earlier. I had no right.”

“Maybe not...but maybe, you did. He needs friends and family, and if you care enough about him to yell at me for not letting you know...I don’t think I have it in me to complain about it.”

“I’m really happy that he’s alright, and so is Lydia.” Jackson chuckled. “She practically freaked out when Scott called us.”

“I promise to keep you in the loop...if something like this happens again.”

“I’d be grateful if you did. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Stiles was the next one to speak to him. "I'll come by tomorrow, and...don't worry about the bill, I took care of it."

"Stiles, you can't-."

"Can and did." Stiles spoke over him. "Don't tell me what I can and cannot do for my nephew." Stiles said, pointing a finger at him with a smirk. "You're my brother, or as close to one as I could ever want so just say 'thank you, Stiles', and watch over him."

Isaac laughed, though he was deeply grateful. "Thank you, Stiles."

"Anything for my guys."

"And, thank you for coming. It...you guys mean a lot to us."

Stiles looked behind him at Derek who was still indulging Sergei's fantasy by being Batman and beating up the pterodactyl.

"It means a lot to *us* that you'd let us come. I don't have to tell you that Derek does not play Batman and the Dinosaurs with just anyone."

"Which is exactly why you and everyone *can* come. I don't like leaning on people...needing them, but with you and Derek and the others...it's...it doesn't feel like the burden that it used to."

"Stiles." Melissa said, warningly.

"Alright, alright, no need to get testy." Stiles huffed. "Come on, Der. Sergei, I'll see you tomorrow, okay?"

Sergei nodded. "Bye, dyadya Stiles, bye, dyadya Derek."

"Bye, kiddo." Derek said, putting down the action figure.

"I know the rule is one visitor, but you're not kicking Jordan out." Isaac said once they had left.

Melissa raised an eyebrow at him, but Isaac wasn't going to be cowed. While Sergei was sick, Isaac might have temporarily forgotten the danger they were in,

but there was no way he was going to spend the night without Jordan

“I’m not going to kick him out, but I’d like for you to watch your tone with me, considering that I did let you break the rules today.”

Isaac sighed and bit down his guilt. “I’m sorry, Melissa, I just...I’m not in the emotional place to be without him at the moment.”

“Well, far be it from me to destroy you emotionally. Besides, John spoke with me before he left, so I’m in the know.”

Isaac was relieved that she was letting Jordan stay, but it was more important that she had not revealed the reason to Sergei, though as Isaac watched his son making a stuffed pterodactyl dance, he realized that of all nights, the one with his son high on morphine probably one where it was safe to discuss stalkers and danger.

“Isaac, I need to speak with you for a moment.” Melissa said, lowering her voice. Isaac heart dropped, even though he knew it shouldn’t have logically. If there was something wrong, she would have led with it. His body felt completely exhausted, though. The yoyo of emotions that it had brought had completely wiped him, and he couldn’t handle any more scares or worries.

“Just...Melissa, I’m tired.”

“I know.” She whispered. “I just need to warn you, because I’m not going to be here. Do you remember how I helped him with the bathroom earlier, so as to not jostle his injury?”

Isaac nodded. He remembered because Melissa had glared him away while she helped Sergei go in a bedpan.

“Won’t there be a night nurse for that?”

She nodded. “If you like, but he should be safe getting up. I just need you to be extremely careful when you’re getting him up, Carry him to the bathroom, because he’ll be lost on the morphine, and if anything goes wrong, call me and the nurse, so I can make sure that he did everything right.”

“What...what could go wrong?” Isaac asked as he tried to ignore the ice in his

blood.

“Nothing terrible, but the I.V. could fell out, a stitch could tear, it’s minor. He’s in the clear, Isaac, your son is going to be alright.”

Isaac nodded. “I know, I’m just paranoid.”

“Which, I get, Isaac, believe me.”

Isaac didn’t believe that, not entirely. He knew that Melissa had been a single parent, and he knew that John had as well. He knew that there were parents all over the world dealing with sick, rebellious, dying, dead, and estranged children, but he didn’t think that a single one of them knew what it was like for him. That was part of life. That all at once, he had a family that loved him and his son, he had a caring boyfriend that he loved, and yet...he was also alone. No one would ever truly know what he was to Sergei and what Sergei was to him, and that was fine with him. They wouldn’t share such a bond if everyone was privy to it.

Notes for the Chapter:

Shit will be hitting the fan soon, we go straight from the hospital arc to the main stalker arc, so...you know, hold on to your butts and so forth.

Also...Jackson said 'pew pew pew'. :D

50. Sem'ya (Family)

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac gets a little worried when an orderly shows up, but learns that he has to expand outside of his normal group of friends.

Isaac

Isaac decided that he hated sleeping in the hospital. Actually, he hated waking up in the hospital. He realized -as he popped his back from sleeping hunched over- that he had become accustomed to waking up in Jordan's arms, and the lack of such a comfortable awakening was less than pleasing, though it was worth it to see Sergei sleeping soundly.

"Morning, babe." Isaac looked around at Jordan, and couldn't help but smile. The man had a small drool mark on his shirt and Isaac could only find it adorable.

"Morning, Vydrachka, I love you." Isaac whispered.

Jordan lifted his eyebrows, but returned the endearment.

"I love you, too, babe, that was...unexpected."

Isaac began to feel a little nervous. "Bad unexpected? Am I saying it too much?"

"No such thing. Every time you say it, my heart does a little jig inside my chest, I just...didn't expect it so early."

"I love you in the morning just as much as I do in the evening." Isaac said with a sloppy grin.

Jordan got up and pressed a kiss to his forehead. "I love you in the morning, too."

"Has he woken up?"

Jordan nodded. "Once, he wanted to go to the bathroom, and I took him. I was

very careful, and even had the night nurse come in once he had put him back into bed. I can call him if you-.”

“I trust you.” Isaac said, simply, eliciting a smile from Jordan. “I know that you wouldn’t let him get hurt.”

“I really wouldn’t.”

Isaac stood up and popped his back, before reaching his arms out to stretch. He recoiled at the stench coming from his armpits.

“Why is it that I stink worse when I’m at the hospital than if I had just stayed home?” He asked with a pout.

“It’s because you were so stressed yesterday.” Jordan said, sniffing his shoulder. “You don’t smell that bad.”

“I disagree, but thank you for being sweet.” Isaac said, leaning back into Jordan’s arms.

“Well, if you’re going to be insistent, why don’t you go and take a shower? I’ll stay here with him.”

Isaac didn’t want to leave Sergei’s side, but knew that he would feel better after being clean, he also knew that Jordan would make sure Sergei stayed comfortable.

“If the doctor comes, could you come and get me? I want to make sure that he’s still alright. Or if Sergei wakes up...he might freak out if I’m not here.”

Jordan nodded and pressed a kiss to his forehead.

Isaac lamented the fact that he didn’t have a clean change of clothes, but stripped, and got in, nonetheless. The hospital’s water pressure had not improved since the last time he had taken a shower, but Isaac still lapped up the warmth like a dying man. There was a soft tranquility in a shower, something that he had trouble replicating, even while holding Sergei.

Isaac scrubbed at his skin, feeling the anxiety from the day before flake off and swirl down the drain with the dirty water. Life would settle, again, and with

Jordan in love with him, and his friends standing beside him, there had never been a moment in his life where he was more secure or happy. Every day just kept getting better and better.

“Babe, Melissa’s here, she’s brought Stiles and Derek.” Jordan called through the door.

Isaac’s happiness was broken by having to put his raunchy clothes back on, but it returned when he saw that Stiles and Derek had brought a duffel bag with them.

“Please tell me that that has clothes in it?” Isaac asked.

Stiles beamed and nodded, pulling out a pair of boxers, shorts, and a tank top for him.

“I love you.” Isaac said before heading back into the bathroom to change.

Jordan looked at him with a smirk and a raised eyebrow when he came back out.

“Well, I love you, too, but...I hate being dirty.”

“And besides, we brought you some, too.” Stiles said, handing the bag out to him, with a smirk.

“Ah...that’s the love that he’s feeling.” Jordan replied taking the bag with a grateful nod.

Isaac turned towards his son, though not without a second of fear when he saw her leaning over him.

“How is he?”

“Doing just great. No extra swelling around the wounds, no more redness than should be expected, and his stiches are fine.”

“Is it...normal that he’s still asleep?” Isaac asked, realizing that it must have been later than he thought if Stiles and Derek were allowed in. When he checked his phone, he saw that it was indeed already eleven-thirty.

Melissa nodded, though. “The drugs we gave him...they’re strong. And I know

he was up and fine, yesterday, but this took a lot out of him. He's a kid, he's got energy to spare, but his body needs to heal. If I'm not seeing redness, then there's no infection."

"What about internal bleeding?" Isaac asked, having made himself aware of all the complications that Sergei's surgery could have brought forth.

Melissa was too wise for that, though. "I'm going to have Jordan take your phone away, I swear." She sighed. "If there was internal hemorrhaging, his temperature and blood pressure would drop. With this type of surgery...it's nearly impossible to even exist, and even if it did, it wouldn't be life threatening."

"You're sure?"

"I swear to you, Isaac." She said with an understanding smile. "He's going to be just fine. He'll probably wake up soon, can I bring you anything from the cafeteria?"

"I'm not hungry." Isaac said. "But, if there's Lucky Charms, I know Sergei would appreciate it."

"Not going to happen, babe. You need to eat." Jordan said, crossing his arms over his chest, and giving Isaac a serious glare before Isaac could even protest.

"He's right, man, just because we're in the hospital, doesn't mean that you need to be...*in* the hospital." Derek said.

It was touching that his friends all cared about him, though he was having trouble finding his appetite. There was still some shock over what had happened, even if he was reassured of his son's security.

"I'll eat, but-."

"Papa?"

All thoughts of eating were banished when Isaac heard his son. He flew to his bedside and took his hand.

"I'm here, son, are you alright?"

“I’m hungry, papa. I want cereal.”

“Melissa, can he...?”

Melissa sighed. “I’ll bring something up, but, Sergei, how are you feeling?”

Sergei looked at Isaac, before looking back at Melissa.

“I feel hungry.” He repeated, making Jordan and Derek chuckle.

“I know, kid, and I’ll get you some food, but you know that you’re important to the people here, right?”

Sergei nodded, beaming at the group.

“Well, we all have to make sure that you’re okay. So before we fill you up with Lucky Charms and some of that candy that Jackson brought you, I just need you to take a moment and think if anything feels wrong.”

Sergei nodded. “My cuts are sore, but it doesn’t hurt like yesterday.”

“Is that all?”

“I’m also...sick...Papa, moy zhivotik chuvstvuyet sebya stranno, no eto ne bol'no?” He asked, and it was easy enough to sum up what his son was feeling.

“Nauseous.” Isaac supplied.

“But no headache?”

Sergei rolled his eyes up as though he was checking, before he shook his head, his hair dancing across his face.

“Nope.”

“That’s good. You’re probably nauseous because of the medicine, but if you don’t have a headache, that means that everything is going alright. I’ll go and get you your cereal, and something so that you don’t feel yucky anymore, okay?”

“Thank you, Melissa.”

“Yes, thank you.” Isaac repeated after his son.

“Of course.” Melissa said with a smile, turning to head out.

“Scott texted, he’ll be here soon.” Stiles said, holding up his phone.

“You know that you guys don’t have to be here. I mean...I appreciate it, I really do, but if you want to go home or something, I’d understand.”

“We’re not leaving.” Derek said. “We’re his sem’ya, ain’t that right, kid?”

Sergei nodded and chuckled. “You learned Russian, dyadya.”

“Not really. Just like Jordan, I’m on to one word a day. Makes sense when the rest of the house can do it.”

“I’m way behind.” Jordan said.

“Bol’nitsa.” Isaac offered, smiling. “It means hospital.”

“I already got one, while you were in the shower. Ya...ya lyublyu tebya.”

Isaac smiled. “I love you too.”

“On deystvitel'no delayet. Ya vizhu eto v yego glazakh.” (He really does. I can see it in his eyes) Stiles said, with a smile.

“Chto v yego glaza, papa?” (What’s in his eyes, papa?)

“Kak on zabolitsya o vashem pape. Kak on zabolitsya o vas.” (How much he cares about your papa. How much he cares about you.)

“It would be marvelous if I knew what was happening.” Derek huffed, though Jordan was watching Isaac with a coy smile as though he knew exactly what was being said.

“We were just...talking, baby.” Stiles said, pressing a kiss to his cheek.

“D-d--did someone order b-breakfast?” An unfamiliar voice asked, making Isaac break eye contact with Jordan to return to his son’s side.

It was a man, about Isaac's age, with striking aquamarine eyes, playfully tousled hair, wearing scrubs, and carrying a tray with two pills, a bowl, milk, and a stack of mini boxes of cereal. He had the look of someone who had once been handsome, but a scar ran down his face, over one eye, leaving a pink trail in its wake. It brought with it a particular edge that Isaac didn't trust, even if it made him guilty for thinking it. He took Sergei's hand, while Jordan moved to block them from view.

"Who are you?" Jordan asked, his tone icy.

"Oh." The man seemed shocked by the rude behavior, but Isaac wasn't willing to let societal niceties let him put his guard down. No one else did, either: Jordan was still standing in the way of direct eye contact with Sergei, Stiles was glaring daggers, and Derek had his hands on his hips. It looked odd, but Isaac was willing to bet his life that Derek had broken the law and brought the gun with him, something that he wouldn't complain about.

"I-I-I'm Kevin. I'm an orderly h-h-here."

"Papa, pochemu on tak govorit'?" (Why does he speak like that?)

Sergei asked, aware enough of the tense situation to speak in Russian, but not enough to not be curious.

Kevin raised an eyebrow at the Russian, but didn't say anything.

"Nekotoryye lyudi... nervnichayut i ne mozhet pomoch', no tak govorit'. Eto nazyvayetsya zaikaniye. Eto grubo ukazat' na eto." (Some people...can't help but speak like that. It's called a stutter. It's rude to point it out.) Isaac explained.

"Where's Melissa?" Jordan asked.

"She h-h-had to go t-t-t-to surgery." Isaac noticed that he spoke with an upwards lilt at the end of his sentences so they sounded like questions. "She asked m-me to bring this."

"And if we called her, would she confirm that?"

"Yes, I would." Melissa said, as she came running into the room. "Isaac, Jordan, I'm so sorry, I sent Kevin here without even thinking about it."

“He’s safe?” Jordan asked.

“He is. He’s an orderly, not a threat. He’s a sweetheart and couldn’t hurt a fly.” Melissa sounded sorry, though her voice warmed considerably when she spoke about Kevin, and a blush came to her cheeks.

Oddly, the others turned their eyes to Isaac before saying anything. He nodded, hoping that if Melissa thought he was safe that he was.

“Sorry, man, it’s just...” Jordan began, and Kevin nodded, a smile appearing on his face, twitching the scar.

“It’s o-o-o-okay. Melissa t-t-told me what happened. I-I-I shouldn’t have just barged in.”

“I still should’ve brought it myself.” Melissa said.

“Papa, can I have my cereal?” Sergei asked, making Isaac smile. Sergei might have been able to tell when Isaac was acting out of character, but his protectiveness wasn’t odd for him. He had always needed to protect the only family he had, and just because there was a real threat now, didn’t mean that Sergei had to catch on.

Notes for the Chapter:

So, something happened. I had meant to post a chapter two days ago, I wrote enough to do it, but I guess I forgot. I'm sorry about that.

51. A Gorgeous Day

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan enjoys a good say with Isaac and Sergei after the latter gets home.

Isaac

Jordan was there when Isaac was allowed to take Sergei home, even though it was a Monday. He had called in before Isaac had even asked him if he wanted to stay. The group had stayed up late, playing board games with Sergei, leading to Sergei being worn out while Melissa explained that Sergei could be released.

Melissa had given Sergei a clean bill of health, though had warned against anything too strenuous for a few days as the stitches needed to finish healing. Isaac knew that his son had a lot of energy, but also knew that despite the fact that he was probably developing a bad habit in Sergei, he could park him in front of the T.V. and let him watch movies and play video games. Derek had vowed to play anything that Sergei wanted, and Isaac was just fine with that.

“Thank you...for staying.” Isaac whispered as he carried a sleeping Sergei to the car. Isaac wasn’t sure of what -if any- consequences Jordan skipping the day would bring, though he was sure that John wouldn’t complain about Jordan staying to keep them safe.

“Don’t mention it, babe. After that...Kevin, I wanted to make sure there were no problems.”

“Vydrachka, Kevin was a nervous, little man, I hardly think that he-.”

“He scared you.” Jordan said, lowly. “He’s probably just an orderly, but I’m not taking any chances, especially not after I slipped up when we got here.” Jordan reached out and squeezed Isaac’s hand for a moment, before returning it to the wheel.

“Well, it’s not like I’m going to complain about your company or the fact that you want to keep us safe.”

“And that’s the best part of staying to protect you: I get to spend time with you

and Sergei.”

When they got home, Jordan unlocked the door, and disabled the alarm, while Isaac took Sergei to his room, and put him in between his covers. Stiles had brought the gifts Sergei had received and put them next to the bed. Isaac took out the stuffed animals and placed them next to Sergei so he knew where they were, before kissing his forehead, and heading out into the living room where Jordan sat on the couch.

Isaac plopped himself next to his boyfriend, glad to be home for the first time in three days.

“I could make you something, if you want.” He said, leaning his head against Jordan’s shoulder.

Jordan snorted. “Babe, let me order you a pizza. You’ve spent the last three days in a shitty hospital bed, fraught with worry for your son, why don’t you just *relax* a little?”

“If I agree to relax, will you hold me until the pizza gets here?” Isaac asked, not wanting to move from his spot

“Like you even have to ask. I’d be cross if you had wanted to get up.” Jordan said, pulling his phone out of his pocket.

“Listen, Jordan, I really appreciate you being there for us. I mean...it’s not really surprising anymore, but I still...I really needed you and you were there for me.”

“I’ll always be here for you, Isaac.” Jordan whispered, kissing the side of his head. Isaac knew it was the truth. When he was cuddled up against his boyfriend, he was sure that it could always be that way. That wasn’t to say that there wasn’t the chance that something could go wrong, but for the time being, they were doing wonderfully.

“You know, I never got to find out what you were going to do for our date. Would it be ruining the surprise if you told me now?”

Jordan grinned. “I guess not. Though, if I ever use it again, I don’t want any guff.”

“I promise I will remain guffless.” Isaac said, holding up his hands in surrender.

“Okay, well, there was a fair the next town over, and I thought it would be great for all of us to go and pig out on some greasy food.”

“Ah, Sergei would’ve liked that.” Isaac said, before admitting. “I would’ve, too.”

“The next fair I find, I promise to take you, then.” Jordan said, seriously.

“I look forward to it.”

“You know, I-.”

Jordan was interrupted by his phone ringing. He picked it up, but kept his arm around Isaac when he did.

“Hey, Tara, what’s wrong?”

Isaac couldn’t hear what Tara was saying, but Jordan’s hand tightened around him as he listened.

“That’s...Just...Look, I can deal with it when I come in, tomorrow.”

Tara’s voice rose a little, but it was still unintelligible to Isaac.

“I said tomorrow, Tara. I’m here with Isaac, Sergei just got home, and it doesn’t sound too urgent...Alright...Alright, I’ll look at it when I come in...you, too.”

“Is it the stalker?” Isaac asked, immediately, trying to get up, though Jordan’s arm kept him from doing so.

“No.” Jordan said, quickly. “It’s just...There was a big case today, and Tara wanted my help on it.”

“Oh, well, if you have to go, I don’t mind.”

“I’m not leaving you, Isaac. They’ll be able to handle it. It’s not a major problem, no one is in danger, and if I have to, I can look at it, tomorrow, okay?” Jordan’s tone was a little edgy, and not being used to it, Isaac pulled back, a little.

“Okay, vydrachka, I’m...I’m sorry.” He whispered.

Jordan’s face fell, and he reached out to run his thumb down Isaac’s cheek.

“No, babe, you have nothing to apologize for, I’m just...It’s my fault, you didn’t do anything wrong.” Jordan said, attempting to smile, though it was shaky, as though Isaac could destroy it with a single word.

Isaac didn’t want to destroy it, though. Jordan was allowed to be testy when it came to work. Isaac had never been in law enforcement and as long as the worst thing that Jordan did was harden his voice a little, Isaac figured that he had nothing wrong.

Jordan

Jordan felt like an idiot. It had been in no way Isaac’s fault that Jordan had snapped. It had been that fucking stalker, again. He had sent Isaac a bouquet of roses and a note hinting that he had seen Isaac at the hospital, and Jordan blamed himself.

No matter how much he tried to keep Isaac safe, the man kept finding ways to get through it, and Jordan didn’t know what to do. Jordan had vowed to keep Isaac and Sergei safe, but he was failing. If the stalker even knew that Isaac and Sergei had been in the hospital, it meant that he was still keeping eyes on him, and that was unacceptable.

“I’m so sorry, Isaac.” Jordan whispered, holding him close.

“Jordan, you had a heated voice, it’s not like you hit me or anything.” Isaac said with a chuckle.

“But I’m not mad at you, I want you to understand that.”

“I know you’re not.” Isaac said, flipping himself around, pressing his face into Jordan’s neck.

Isaac was something supernatural, it was the only explanation that Jordan had for the way the man made him feel. The puff of hot air against his throat tore his

body to pieces. He felt his cock harden, but his mind was lost somewhere in the pleasure he felt at Isaac's ministrations. Still, Jordan tried to control himself as he pushed Isaac away, even if it hurt him to do so, especially when Isaac's face fell.

"Did I do something wrong?" He asked.

Jordan shook his head. "No, of course not. I love it when you touch me, but Sergei's asleep in the other room. I'd feel terrible if Sergei came in and saw us... intimate."

Isaac's lip jutted out in a definite pout, tugging at Jordan's heart and making him chuckle.

"You *are* cute when you pout." Jordan said.

"I'm not pouting, I'm manfully displaying my lower lip." Isaac retorted.

"Whatever you call it, it's cute. So, you're not mad?"

"Oh, I'm furious, vydrachka, you stopped kissing me."

Jordan returned his lips to Isaac's not only wanting to make the man smile again, but also because it made him feel good to be making out with his boyfriend. They didn't go too far, though Isaac's hands slipped under his shirt to tease his nipple once in a while, but they had managed to stay clothed by the time the pizza came, though Jordan was glad for the concealing nature of his tight jeans when he opened the door.

While Jordan paid, Isaac went to get Sergei, so that when Jordan brought the boxes to the kitchen, he was sitting with a grumpy look on his face, and rubbing his eyes.

"Hey, kiddo, you hungry, or do you want to go back to sleep?" Jordan asked, dropping the boxes onto the counter.

"Pizza." Sergei said, moodily. Jordan ruffed his hair.

"Come on, Seryozha, cheer up. Who can be sad around pizza?"

“M not sad, just tired. I want coffee.” Sergei mumbled.

Isaac snorted. “Sergei, you’re too young for coffee.”

Jordan had to agree, but found it funny that Sergei was asking for something so adult.

“But you drink coffee to wake up.” Sergei argued.

“Sometimes.” Isaac stressed. “And I...I am very old, so I need coffee.”

“You’re not old, babe, you’re only twenty-six.” Jordan said, reassuringly.

“Which is old enough to have coffee.”

“Please, papa? You said when I got home, I could have anything that I wanted.” Sergei reminded him, his voice brightening at his own reminder of Isaac’s promise.

“That’s when you were sick, Sergei.”

Sergei gave him a sad look and gave out a fake cough, which made Isaac laugh.

“Alright, I’ll give you some, but...you’re not going to like it.” Isaac warned, moving to the coffee pot which Stiles had filled that morning. Isaac pulled a small glass from the cupboard and filled it with the black liquid.

“Here you go.”

Sergei gleefully grabbed the cup and took a small sip, his back straight like he was trying to be a grown up. The smile on his face slowly fell and his tongue fell from his mouth.

“Papa, eto protivnyy!”

“I warned you.” Isaac said, shaking with laughter. “So, the next time that I tell you that something is gross, are you going to believe me?”

Sergei nodded and pushed the cup away. Isaac dumped it down the sink, and gave Sergei a plate for his pizza.

“Let’s go with something a little more appropriate.” Isaac said as he poured his son a glass of juice.

Jordan found the entire scene funny, but he found the experience of just watching Isaac and Sergei so much more enjoyable. It reminded him what he was protecting them for. It wasn’t just so that he could know Isaac and Sergei were safe, it was because they deserved these moments. They deserved to feel secure enough for Sergei to learn that coffee was bitter without worrying that they were being watched.

“Jordan, do you like coffee?”

Jordan actually preferred energy drinks, but seeing Sergei gulping down juice, he decided not to mention that.

“I do, but it...it doesn’t start tasting good until you’re a teenager.” Jordan said. It was partially the truth. Isaac raised an impressed eyebrow.

If Jordan needed confirmation for his decision not to reveal the truth of why Tara had called, this was it. Jordan sat down and tore into his pizza, a smile on his face as he realized that he really loved his new family.

Notes for the Chapter:

Last fluff chapter before SHTF next chapter.

I'm typing whenever I Can, but five classes, so some chapters might be short or late, and for that, I apologize wholeheartedly.

Thank you for the people who are following/reading this, it certainly seems to be unpopular amongst my fics, but I'm glad that some of you are enjoying it. :)

52. Consequences

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan faces the music

Isaac

Isaac awoke to Jordan's phone ringing. They had been together long enough that Isaac could tell the difference between it and his alarm, but Jordan only silenced it, looking down guiltily.

"Sorry, babe." He whispered.

"Is it work?" Isaac asked, holding onto Jordan more tightly. He knew that Jordan couldn't just stay home with him, but was going to spend as much time as he could cuddled next to the man that he loved.

"Yeah, do you mind?" He asked, and Isaac shook his head, laying his head back down on Jordan's chest.

"Hello?" Jordan's voice vibrated his torso, tickling Isaac's ear in a pleasant way.

Isaac wasn't sure who was on the other end of the phone, but Jordan sat up, quickly, jostling Isaac, before his hand reached down, and rubbed his back, apologetically.

"I'll be in in twenty minutes." Jordan said, before hanging up.

"Something big going down?" Isaac asked, sitting up. "Is it-?"

"No, Isaac, you guys are safe, it's just that job from yesterday is turning out bigger than expected."

"Oh, well, then you should go."

"I have to, babe, I wish I didn't have to, though. I'd much rather just stay here with you."

Isaac chuckled, completely understanding Jordan's responsibilities.

"Vydrachka, I can't be the only one that you protect. We've talked about this, go to your job, keep the people of Beacon Hills safe, and I'll have dinner waiting for you when you get home."

Jordan grinned at him. "Babe, you don't have to. I promised not to make you feel like you had to."

"But sometimes, I like to." Isaac said with a chuckle, knowing that Jordan would never have taken advantage of him.

"Well in that case, I'll look forward to coming to you and a hot meal. Make sure...make sure Sergei doesn't overwork himself? I'd...I'd really hate to come home to find you guys at the hospital. Is it bad that I just asked that?"

"Is it bad that I asked you to look out for my son, and you're doing that? No, Jordan. And, I promise to make sure that Sergei doesn't overdo it."

"I'll see you when I get back." Jordan said, kissing Isaac passionately, before sliding out of bed and heading to his drawer to get dressed.

"No shower?" Isaac said, a little let down that he wouldn't get to see Jordan naked.

"No time, babe. They need me in, right away."

The urgency worried Isaac. "There's nothing...wrong, is there? I mean...Jordan, you're not in danger, right?"

"What?" Jordan turned around with a surprised expression. "Babe, no. I'm...you're worried that I won't come home." It wasn't a question, because it didn't need to be. Isaac was worried that if there was something so important that Jordan was rushing out, that it would be dangerous, and he might never come home. Isaac couldn't handle losing Jordan. Even without the stalker, Jordan had become integrated into his life, tattooed permanently on his heart, and Sergei was just as bonded.

"Well, clear your head of those dark, little thoughts." Jordan said, sauntering over to the bed, and pressing a kiss to Isaac's head. "Everything is alright, it's

just...there's a missing kid, we think his mother took him, even though she doesn't have custody."

Isaac's heart went out to the father. He didn't know what he'd do if Natasha had taken Sergei.

"Well, then you need to go. If it was Sergei, I'd hate the man stood in the way of finding him...Hell, I'd probably kill him."

"I'll be home, soon. Don't miss me too much."

"That's impossible." Isaac said, smiling at Jordan.

"I love you, Isaac...so much."

"I love you, too, vydrachka." Isaac said, hugging Jordan, before letting him go to work.

Jordan

The stalker was getting worse. Jordan's call had led to another lie, but if Isaac knew that there had been two notes in the same number of days, he would have panicked.

When Jordan arrived at the office, he saw Tara and John both watching him with grim faces.

He knew that whatever it was, he could handle it, but that didn't stop him from being a little nervous as he approached them.

"What is it?" He asked. In order to keep himself from revealing the truth to Isaac, Jordan had kept the call as short as possible.

"Parrish, we need to talk." John said, solemnly, waving him into the office.

Jordan had a sense of foreboding as he entered the office and shut the door behind him. John sat at the desk and rubbed the bridge of his nose with his fingers as though he already had a migraine.

“John, what is it?” Jordan asked, his throat dry, all he knew was that another message had been sent.

“The stalker...he’s becoming more aggressive.” John said, holding out the two letters, “and we need to talk about your conduct.”

Jordan’s heart dropped as he took the sheets of paper. The first one was just a bunch of pictures, but it was what they were pictures of that terrified Jordan: Odd angled snapshots, some of them extremely blurry, and some of them crisp, showed Isaac, Sergei, and Jordan doing various activities. Some of them showed the hospital, others were of Sergei sleeping in his bed. The stalker would have had to press himself against the glass in order to get the shots. Others were of their trip to the zoo and the park. A few had a car that Jordan recognized as his own. The entire sheet was the stalker showing that the escort did nothing to stop him.

The letter was even more damning:

Hello, Jordan,

Normally, I would have written Isaac, but it’s come to my attention that you’ve been taking my letters and keeping them from the man that I love. It’s not enough for you to touch what doesn’t belong to you, now you have to keep the only other correspondence that I have? Perhaps yesterday’s letter will convince you that I don’t need your consent to be near them. Isaac is mine. Sergei is mine, and the sooner you realize that, the sooner we can all go on with our lives. Leave Isaac alone, leave my son alone, or I will make things clear through different means. You used to work on a bomb squad, right? Diffuse this situation or I will retaliate.. I’m watching you, Jordan, do not do anything that will make me hurt people.

Fuck off and die,

A friend.

“That’s...no.” Jordan whispered. He imagined the sicko sitting in a room, carving Isaac’s name into his arm as he wrote or some other dark twisted thing, thinking to himself that he had successfully scared Jordan away, but it wasn’t the case. Jordan loved Isaac, and wasn’t going to let a cowardly asshole break them apart.

“I’m not leaving.” He said to John, firmly.

“Jordan, is what this says true?” John said, ignoring his deputy’s anger. “Are you keeping Isaac in the dark?”

“Not...Not in the way that it seems, I’m just...I’m doing my job, sir. I’m protecting him.”

“By hiding the truth?” John asked, waspishly. “That’s not your job. Isaac has a right to know what this man is doing.”

“It scares him, I’m keeping him in a calm state of mind.” Jordan said, using the same justification that he had when he thought of the idea, but under John’s glare, it seemed to be less solid than he had first thought. He felt guilt beginning to seep through him and he wasn’t sure if he had made the right decision when it came to protecting the man that he loved.

“That’s not fair to him. Do you think if it was any other case and my deputy wasn’t in love with the victim that I’d keep information from him?”

“I-.”

“I wouldn’t, Jordan, and you fucking know better!” John shouted. “You’ve created a fucking mess that I have to clean up, now! He’s threatening more than just you or Isaac, this last note is a general threat, and with his reference to your earlier job...just go.”

“I’ll fix this, John.” Jordan whispered. He had never messed up like this, before, and he needed to prove that he was still valuable to the force...and valuable to Isaac.

“You misunderstood. I didn’t mean to go and work, I meant go home. I’m suspending you with pay.”

Jordan felt his blood turn to ice. He didn’t care about the money or even being employed, but he wanted to keep Isaac safe above all else, and he couldn’t do that from home.

“John, you need me here.” Jordan argued, his guilt fading away to make room for anger. “I need to be working this case.”

“And what has it helped so far, Jordan?” John said with a heavy sigh. “What have we managed to do to make Isaac any safer?”

“The patrols-.” Jordan began, fully believing that without Matt and Tara, Isaac would have been harassed far more often, perhaps even physically.

“And how do you affect the patrols? The thing you do to help Isaac is stay there with him. I can’t overlook this.” He said, shaking the letter. “You are going to go to Isaac’s house and tell him what you did and update him so he knows to be more wary when going out.”

The prospect of telling the truth to Isaac scared Jordan more than the stalker did.

“John, he-ll.” Jordan started, but John interrupted him, again.

“Either you do it, or I will. He needs to know.”

Jordan nodded, though he wasn’t sure how Isaac would react, and that terrified him. He loved Isaac and Sergei and had only done it with their best interests in mind. He knew that if he could just explain what he had been thinking, Isaac would understand. After all, he did the same thing to Sergei, withheld information to make him feel safer.

“John, I’m sorry.” Jordan whispered, knowing that he had messed up.

“This is why we keep significant others off of cases. That conflict of interest thing that gets brought during orientation? This would be it.”

“I...I don’t want to leave him unprotected.” Jordan said. “Please, John, you have to let me stay on.”

“You can’t separate your feelings for him from your job, and I’d keep you on for other cases, you’re the best man that I’ve got, but I know you, you wouldn’t drop it.”

“It can’t be dropped, he needs-.”

“Protection, and you’re going to be there, at his house with gun, I’ll up the patrols...nothing is going to happen to him, Jordan.”

If anything did, Jordan didn't know how he would go on. Isaac was his life, and just because he was off the case didn't mean that he couldn't still keep Isaac and his son safe.

"He's my nephew, Jordan, I'm not abandoning him."

Isaac looked shocked but happy to see Jordan, which wasn't that much of a surprise, since he had only been gone for an hour.

"Well, you certainly know how to make a man happy." Isaac said, kissing him on the cheek, a wide grin on his face. Jordan tried to match it, but apparently couldn't, because Isaac's face fell into a frown.

"What's wrong?" He asked. "Did something happen to that boy?" Isaac looked like he was on the verge of crying.

Jordan shook his head, touched by Isaac's sensitivity. "Isaac, there was never any boy...I..." Jordan sighed, putting an arm on Isaac's shoulder. "You should sit down, we need to talk."

Notes for the Chapter:

So, this is a thing that happened. I told you'd he'd have to pay...but, it's not over yet. Next chapter he has to tell the truth to Isaac.

Thank you to the people who comment, it really makes me feel better about the low numbers.

53. Consequences Pt. 2

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan continues to pay for the wrongs that he committed.

Jordan

The single greatest regret that Jordan had ever experienced was the crestfallen, hurt, and disappointed look in Isaac's eyes as he listened to Jordan explain what he had done.

"I swear that I was only trying to do what I thought would make you feel better."

"You thought...that *lying* was the way to go forward in our relationship?" He asked in a whisper of quiet fury.

"Not...Not lying, Isaac, I was just-."

"Oh, spare me! You didn't tell me, which sometimes I can understand, but for this? You thought that I shouldn't know what that asshole was saying about me and my son?"

Like John, Isaac's words had a way of making Jordan feel worse. He had thought that he was doing the right thing, and hadn't pictured Isaac getting as mad as he was.

"Your panic attacks, babe..." Jordan felt his heart breaking and was trying to explain that he had done what he had with the best intentions. "I was trying to keep you from having them."

Isaac snorted, but it had no humor in it. "So, they *are* a problem?"

"No...Isaac, I didn't mean it like that, I just meant...I love you, and I hate seeing you in pain." Jordan said, reaching out to take Isaac's hand. Isaac recoiled, though, making Jordan let out a sob. The move cut through him like a knife. He had expected anger, but for Isaac to be rejecting his touch was painful.

"You lied to me, Jordan, you...I have the right to know."

“I know and I see that now, and I’m sorry, I was just doing for you what you do for Sergei.”

“Sergei is seven!” Isaac snapped. “He’s a fucking child, so of course I hide things from him. I’m an adult, Jordan. What the hell were you thinking?”

“That I wanted you to be safe.” Jordan repeated. “I wanted you to not have to live in fear.”

“That’s not your choice. I trusted you.” Isaac’s words tore through him. “With him, with my heart, I *trusted* you, do you have any idea what that means for me? Do you think that I just hand out trust on the side of the street to anyone who passes by?”

“Of course not, babe. I know...I hurt you, and I wasn’t trying to, I just wanted-.”

“I know what you wanted,” Isaac snapped, his breath hitching as he stood up. “You made that very clear, but here’s the thing: I don’t care. We’re in a relationship, Jordan, which means at the very least you could have asked me, but you didn’t. You made a unilateral decision regarding me and my son. Which is not how these things work. I mean...I’m not an expert, but-.”

“You’re right.” Jordan said, not only agreeing because he wanted Isaac to just... hold him, again, but because he knew that he had messed up. He was repentant and was willing to do anything so that Isaac would forgive him. “Isaac, I’m sorry.”

“I know, that, but...” A tear escaped Isaac’s eye and Jordan forced himself from reaching out to wipe it away. “I can’t do this right now, Jordan.”

“But...Isaac, I fucked up, but please don’t...ya lyublyu tebya.” He said, hesitantly reaching out to hug Isaac, but Isaac pulled back, making Jordan sob, too. “Just tell me what you need me to do to make it better.”

“I want you to go, Jordan.” Isaac said, quietly.

“Isaac, no. I can’t-.”

“Jordan, I want you to leave.” Isaac repeated, more firmly, though his tears were making the words thick.

Jordan could handle Isaac being mad at him, even if it was slowly killing him, but he didn't want to leave Isaac vulnerable.

"But...the stalker, babe, I...I can't just leave."

"Leave or I'll have John make you leave. You asked me what I want and I want you to get out, I...I need some time to think."

"But, Isaac-." Jordan began, though he was stopped by a strong push at his waist. Jordan looked down and saw Sergei glaring at him, his arms outstretched as he tried to protect his father.

"You hurt my papa!" He shouted, shoving Jordan, again.

"No, Seryozha, I just-."

"You can't call me that, only nice people can call me that."

"Isaac, babe-."

"Go!" Isaac shouted, picking up Sergei.

Jordan had little recourse but to turn his back on the one man he loved and head for the door.

"Just...set the alarm, please?" Jordan asked, needing for Isaac to be safe, even if he wasn't allowed to protect him anymore. "And...I'm so sorry, babe...I...I love you."

Jordan shut the door behind him, and managed to make it to his car before breaking down. He sobbed against the steering wheel, feeling so ashamed with himself for having destroyed the best thing to ever happen to him. Jordan loved Isaac and Sergei, more than he had even realized, because knowing that Isaac didn't want to see him was ripping into pieces. Jordan couldn't even drive, the hole in his heart was widening with every moment that he went without Isaac. He swore to himself that if Isaac ever extended his trust to him again, he would make sure that it was cherished and safeguarded. He would never give Isaac a reason to hate or be wary of him, again, and that began with Jordan doing as he was asked, and leaving.

Isaac

“Papa, did he hurt you?” Sergei asked for the fifth time, holding onto Isaac for dear life.

Isaac, who had never felt more betrayed in his life, was still sobbing, though he tried to stem that flow of tears to reassure his son. They were laying in Isaac’s bed together, though Isaac thought that maybe that had been a mistake since he could still smell Jordan’s musk on the sheets.

“No, son, he didn’t.” Isaac lied. Jordan had not touched him, he had seemed sorry and as though he truly regretted what he had done, but Isaac still felt hurt that Jordan had treated him like a child who couldn’t know what was really happening.

It was a complete violation of everything that Isaac believed relationships were supposed to be about, especially theirs. Isaac had given Jordan his trust, had started to see Jordan as someone who could be a second father to Sergei, something that he had never come close to seeing any in any other man.

Sergei was the single most important thing to Isaac, and it had not been an easy decision for Isaac to allow Jordan to become a part of their close knit group, and what Jordan had done had made Isaac regret that.

“But, papa, you’re crying, what did Jordan do?” Sergei asked, no doubt utterly confused about the turn of events. Isaac had not been surprised to see that Sergei had been willing to turn on Jordan so quickly when he had begun to cry, Sergei was fiercely protective of him, but it didn’t answer all of Sergei’s questions, especially when Isaac insisted that Jordan had not hurt him.

“Jordan...hurt my feelings, Seryozha.”

“But you said that he didn’t hurt you.”

Isaac sighed and wiped his eyes, before taking a shuddering breath, and trying to explain.

“Sergei, it’s important that you understand that adults hurt each other’s feelings

once in a while. It's sad when it happens, but it's very different than if Jordan had physically hurt me." Isaac knew that Sergei would look at Jordan with disdain for a long time, but as a man who had suffered the blows of a physically abusive relationship, he knew that there was a critical difference between betraying trust, and physically striking someone, and even if he wasn't particularly in the mood to do it at the moment, he knew that he could forgive Jordan for this, but he would never be able to forgive him if he had raised his hand to him.

"Like how dyadya Jackson hurt your feelings when you were little?" Sergei asked.

"Yes." Isaac said, he tried to breathe normally, but it still hitched occasionally.

"If you forgave dyadya Jackson, does that mean that you'll forgive Jordan?"

Sergei really was too smart for his own good. Isaac didn't know too many seven year olds, but he was sure that many of them weren't as invested in the second relationship that their parents were in, but then again, Jordan had taken the time to make himself worthy in Sergei's eyes.

"I don't know." Isaac said, unsure if he could.

"Are you mad at me for yelling at him?" Sergei sounded a little worried, but Isaac just kissed his hair.

"You were defending me, son. I could never be mad at you for that. If...I forgave him, would you be willing to forgive him, too?"

"He was really nice, until he made you cry. I like him, papa, but I'll only talk to him if you say that it's okay."

It was unlike Sergei to have a vindictive nature for very long, but that fact that he would simply trust Isaac's lead in the matter was reassuring. With his anger and sadness draining away, Isaac felt unsure if he was willing to hold a grudge against Jordan for long. The man had done so much good in their time together, and Isaac didn't know if it could or should make up for his betrayal.

"Let's sleep on it and we can talk about it tomorrow, I'm kind of sleepy." Isaac said.

“Can I stay with you, papa?”

“Of course you can, Sergei. Are you tired, too?”

“A little bit.”

All Isaac needed was a little bit of sleep and a lot of discussion. He resolved himself to talk it over with Stiles and Derek when he woke up, as he was already unsure if he had been too harsh in dealing with Jordan. He had been wounded and had lashed out, but he knew that Jordan was only human, and was bound to make mistakes.

Another, deeper part of Isaac was even afraid that if he did not apologize to Jordan, he might lose him. Their first argument, and he had made the man leave, which might be seen as petty or as though he didn't take their relationship too seriously. For all intents and purposes, Jordan had moved in with Isaac, and Isaac had shunned him.

And yet, Isaac still felt that he had good reason to do so. He didn't want to be a doormat, and if he forgave Jordan and took him back, Isaac had to make it clear that such an event could never happen again.

He was conflicted, though, in wanting Jordan back in his arms, and wanting to make it clear that he found what had been done was completely inappropriate. Jordan was still the best thing that had happened to him in a long time.

Isaac felt his swollen eyelids droop closed, while he held his son. If he had scared Jordan off for good or decided against forgiving him, it was reassuring that for the time being, he would always have Sergei.

*

Isaac wasn't even asleep long enough to remember any of his dreams, but he was aware when he felt the bed dip and a hand wrap around his waist. He felt, for a moment, as if he was still sleeping, because he had explicitly told Jordan not to return until he was ready to forgive him, but that one fear was replaced by a thousand more teeming ones when a light male voice spoke in his ear:

“Oh, baby, you have no idea how long I've waited for this moment.”

Isaac wished that he had never sent Jordan away.

Notes for the Chapter:

So...I'll just be over here, behind the barricade of people who want to flay me.

WARNING: The next few chapters will not be fun, the tags are dark, and this is mostly what they were referring to.

54. Truths

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac finds out who his stalker is and Jordan hatches a plan.

Notes for the Chapter:

Ahem...WARNING! This chapter contains triggery things. DO NOT scroll down until after you read the chapter to avoid spoilers.

Jordan

Jordan was lost. Without Isaac, he felt as though he had no direction in life, but missing his boyfriend *and* his job was something that he was not prepared for. He felt completely helpless. If he had only been without his job, he could have gone to Isaac for comfort. Hell, he might have even preferred all of the free time that he could have spent with Isaac. And if he had only lost Isaac, he would have poured everything iota of his being into protecting the man that he loved, still keeping him safe, but without the option of either of them, he didn't know what he was supposed to do.

For the barest moment, he understood how easy it would be for *him* to become the man who watched Isaac from the shadows. If he had no interest in pursuing anything from Isaac except for absolute loathing, he would go against Isaac's wishes and guard the man, anyway. He saw the potential for something else, though. Isaac was the first man he had ever loved with his entire heart and soul, he wasn't about to risk destroying that without at least fighting for it, and he couldn't do that if Isaac knew he had done the exact opposite of what had been asked of him. Matt was watching the house, and would let Jordan know if anything too dire had happened.

Jordan sat in his armchair, a glass of whiskey in his hand, though he hadn't taken a sip, yet. He found himself unable to do anything without thinking of Isaac. He thought about watching T.V., but hesitated when he wanted to turn and ask what Sergei wanted. He thought about ordering pizza, but had typed in Isaac's order before cancelling the whole thing.

When Jordan moved to put his phone down, though, it began to vibrate, and

Stiles' name flashed across the screen.

"Hello?"

"You know, just because he's with you, doesn't mean that the house doesn't have to be protected."

Jordan was confused. "What do you mean?"

"I came home and the door was open and the alarm was off, how am I supposed to...?"

Stiles kept speaking, but Jordan didn't hear him. His ears became full of sharp ringing tone as his heart beat a cruel tattoo against his chest. Stiles seemed to believe that Isaac and Sergei were with him, but they weren't...Jordan knew all too well that they weren't. Someone had taken Isaac, and Jordan didn't need three guesses as to whom.

"Stiles, shut up." Jordan hissed into the phone, anger and anxiety thundering in his veins as he stood up to head back to the station. "Isaac is not with me, we had a fight and I went home. He should have been there."

Stiles was silent for a moment, before Jordan could hear him calling Isaac's name throughout the house. Even though he was prepared to begin the search for the man that he loved, Jordan still prayed that he would hear Isaac answer from the other end of the line.

He didn't.

"Jordan...Sergei and Isaac are gone." Stiles whispered, sounding terrified.

Jordan felt the words like knives in his heart. He had stared death in the face, before, felt its curdled breath over his neck, but seeing its hand over Isaac made him want to freeze and shut down. The only thing that kept him moving towards his car, the only thing that kept him from giving up hope was knowing that he *had* to try and save Isaac and Sergei.

"Stiles, I'm heading to the station, I'm *going* to find them, okay?"

"Jordan, you're not doing this alone, I'm coming, too."

“Stiles, you don’t...you’re not a cop.”

“If you think that I’m not going to help find him, you can bite me, Jordan. He’s my friend, too.”

“Yes, but I’m a trained officer of the law, with over four years in the military, and-“

“I’m already leaving, so either help or arrest me.” Stiles argued, making Jordan sigh. He had no energy or time for a fight with Stiles, even though he knew that Isaac would be mad at him for getting his friend into trouble, Jordan had no choice but to agree.

“Fine, but bring Derek’s gun. And Stiles...We’re not aiming to hurt. He took Isaac, he’s not coming through this.” Jordan growled, no thought of mercy even entering his mind. Jordan wove through traffic, ignoring the speed limit, intent on getting to the station.

“I know, Jordan...We’ll find him.” Stiles whispered, sounding as though he was convincing himself as much as Jordan. Jordan wanted, *needed* to believe Stiles’ words. It was a stalker, someone who had been obsessed with Isaac, which meant that Jordan had something to believe in. But that didn’t stop him from flooring the pedal and swerving to get to the station as soon as possible.

“Derek’s home, I’m going to catch him up.” Stiles said before hanging up, just as Jordan was pulling into the station.

John did not look pleased about Jordan marching into the building, but before he could even open his mouth Jordan spoke over him.

“He took Isaac and Sergei.” He said in a low voice. “Not four hours after you took me off of the case. So you are going to round up every fucking person in this building and help me find him.”

Jordan knew that John really wasn’t to blame. It had been his foolish act that had led to Isaac kicking him out. If he hadn’t been...maybe he could have prevented it. Still, it made things easier to put the blame on John. When he got Isaac back, he would shoulder his responsibility, and suffer whatever consequences that Isaac thought were necessary.

John stood still for a moment, before slamming the side of his fist into the wall, making Jordan jump.

“Son of a bitch!” He shouted, storming closer to Jordan. “Why the hell weren’t you with him?”

“Because he kicked me out, just like you did!” Jordan yelled, not bothering to keep his voice low. “Because it was someone’s brilliant idea that he had to know the truth. I could have told him after all of this was over, then...at least he’d still be safe.” He whispered, brokenly.

“Fuck. Greenburg!” John roared. “We’re setting up a search, I want my nephew and his son found at any cost! Erica, head to my son’s, and run a complete sweep! I want to know how he got in!” John turned back to Jordan who held up his hands.

“Arrest me for insubordination, if you have to, but...I’m not sitting at home with him missing.”

“You’re going to run a trace of his and Sergei’s phones, it’s a long shot, but maybe you can find them.”

It was the best suggestion that he had heard in regards to finding Isaac.

Isaac

Isaac awoke from his panic attack handcuffed to a hardwood headboard in a strange room. He had shut down when he felt the man’s gun pressing against his spine, and as much as he had tried to stay cognizant for the sake of his son, his mind had had other ideas. Without Jordan there, Isaac had fallen into a world of blackness, with no reprieve.

Isaac immensely regretted sending Jordan away. His anger had been so resolute at the time, but he knew that if he had simply listened to the man’s explanation, he wouldn’t be where he was. Isaac loved Jordan, and nothing made that more clear than knowing that he might never see him again.

Isaac looked around the room, trying to get a bearing on where he was but

finding the room completely unfamiliar. He was on red silk sheets and thankfully dressed. The bare walls were a deep blue, and a ceiling fan blew cooling air over Isaac. The room had the traditional furnishings: a dresser, a nightstand, and a mirrored armoire, all the same cherry wood as the headboard.

The room was devoid of his son, though, and that was the thing that was driving him mad. Isaac pulled against the chain of the handcuffs, but thought the headboard groaned, it did not budge. Isaac was determined to prevent another panic attack as his first had led to his current predicament.

“Sergei!” Isaac called, desperately, pulling at his handcuffs. He needed to know that his son was alright.

“You know, as amazing as you are, you aren’t strong enough to break steel, baby.”

Isaac looked up as the man walked into the room, and Isaac recognized him, immediately.

“Kevin?” He breathed.

Instead of the shy man that Isaac had met in the hospital, Kevin stood cockily over Isaac, a lewd grin on his face, no trace of a stutter when he spoke.

“Well, no, actually. I faked my documents to get my job at the hospital, I was laying low after a spot of trouble. I came here to get away from the law, I never expected to find the love of my life, though.”

Isaac was confused. If Kevin...whatever his name was, was the stalker, Isaac didn’t know how he could claim to have loved Isaac and Sergei, when Isaac had never seen him before Sergei had gotten sick. Still, Isaac didn’t care who the fuck had taken him, he just wanted his son back.

“Let me go to Sergei.” Isaac growled.

“Sergei’s fine, baby.” Kevin said, sitting on the bed. Isaac tried to squirm away, but the cuffs prevented him from getting too far. Kevin reach out and ran a hand down Isaac’s face, making Isaac feel like throwing up. “I made his room up, just the way he likes it, he’s watching *Up*.”

“Let me see him.” Isaac repeated, not caring how much work Kevin went to in order to make his creepy actions less creepy.

“First time alone with you boyfriend, and you want to see your son.” Kevin shook his head, fondly. “I knew that you were an amazing father, but there will be time for all of that later.”

“No!” Isaac cried, hating the whiney tone of his voice, but finding himself unable to do anything, but panic when he was being kept from Sergei. He didn’t even know if he was alive, Kevin could have been lying. “Please, I need to see him.”

“And I need to see you. I’ve been in love with you for a long time, Isaac, why don’t you want to spend time with me?”

“Because you’re a fucking stalker that kidnapped me and my son!” Isaac shouted. “You are *not* my boyfriend, you’re nothing to me except the cause of everything wrong in my life.”

Kevin scowled. “That’s not very nice, considering everything that I did to get us to be together. You’re hurting my feelings.”

Isaac jerked his handcuffs in anger. “I don’t give a fuck about your feelings, Kevin! What I care about is seeing my son and watching my boyfriend, my *real* boyfriend make you suffer for taking us!”

“I told you, my name isn’t Kevin, it’s Liam, and I *am* your real boyfriend. I’ve been watching you for a long time, destiny has allowed us to finally be together, and you’re...you’re ruining it.”

Isaac didn’t respond, his mind whirling with new information. Liam was obviously deranged and not in the right state of mind, but Isaac did recognize his name. If this Liam was who he thought he was, Isaac had gone to high school with him. He had been something of a loner, mainly keeping to himself, not even enough of an entity for Isaac, Stiles, and Scott to notice. But Isaac remembered a Liam Dunbar, a sophomore, who had been caught trying to bring a gun to the school. The incident, which had been stopped before it had even started had been one of the more terrifying aspects of Isaac’s childhood, and considering what his father had put him through, that was saying a lot.

Puberty had been a great friend to Liam. The man sitting next to him, now was muscular, and handsome, except for the scar running across his face.

All of it was a moot point, though. Isaac didn't care if he knew the man or not, it didn't make them boyfriends, and it didn't make him any less willing in his convictions to see his son.

"We're not together, Liam. We'll never be together, and the only thing that you can do to make this right is let me see my son, and get out of here."

Liam shook his head and rolled over onto Isaac, making the man squirm.

"You'll love me...I know you will, but, in the meantime," He ran his fingers through Isaac's hair, "what do you say we get a little more intimate?"

Before Isaac could respond, he felt a sharp sting in his arm, and looked down to see Liam injecting him with a syringe full of a clear liquid. Immediately, Isaac's vision began to swim, and he felt a warm embrace, like that of morphine dragging him down.

"I knew you wouldn't say no." Liam's voice sounded far away he pressed a kiss onto Isaac's lips, and Isaac felt himself slip into sleep.

Notes for the Chapter:

Okay, so I had demands for the next chapter, so I typed a lot to get this posted. I'm still trying to stay 10,000 words ahead in case there's a reason that I can't type for a few weeks.

A quick note and disclaimer: Liam is of age in this fic, which is why I made him go to school with Isaac, so you'd know they were around the same age.

I chose Liam for several reasons:

1. It's a common trope, one that I have fallen into myself, for the villains in Teen Wolf fics to be Aiden, Peter, or Deucalion. I wanted to subvert this trope and go with someone unexpected.
2. I wasn't aware of who it would be until about three chapters before this one. I wrote it specifically not keeping anyone in mind so that I didn't reveal it by accident. When I release this as a novel, it won't have the same effect, but it's still a neat trick that I thought I'd try.
3. Liam is so unassuming that I figured, even after I picked him to be the villain, that no one would have suspected him.

I'm not changing the tags, because I don't want to spoil the surprise for future readers.

So, it's usually around...now that I lose some of my readers because they didn't like the twist in the fic, which always hurts a little, but I'm always happy if I have even one reader, so for those who don't think that Liam should be a bad guy: It was nice having you, I really appreciate it. :)

55. Domestic

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac tries to adjust to life with Liam and Jordan thinks of a way to find Isaac

Notes for the Chapter:

WARNING FOR NON-CON!

Isaac

Isaac awoke in agony.

His head was throbbing wildly, making his vision swim and his stomach churn, his throat was parched, and he could feel his limbs protesting the awkward position that he had woken up in. His wrists burned and when he managed to focus on them, he saw that they were bright red, as though they had been rubbed raw by the constant friction of the handcuffs.

Isaac could live with all of it, though if it hadn't been for the excruciating jolt of pain that he received when he moved, emanating from his ass. Isaac felt as though his hole had been torn to bits by something, and considering Liam's actions before he had passed out...he had a pretty good idea what that something was.

The thought that he had been used in such a manner compounded with his nausea made Isaac vomit on the sheets, the dark pool of liquid slowly spreading its way through the fibers.

Unlike when he had the flu or food poisoning, Isaac didn't feel better after the upchuck, though. Isaac could feel Liam's semen leaking from his body, but felt something else nestling itself in his chest. A feeling of defilement that he knew he would never be able to wash from his body.

Isaac groaned and then screamed. It was a strangled sound that slowly turned into a sob as he realized what had been taken from him, what Liam had done, and that he still had no idea where his son was.

Isaac wasn't sure how long he cried against the pillow in the room, but it was long enough that when Liam returned, Isaac was able to lash out in fury, rather than grief.

Liam approached the bed, a soft grin on his face like there was nothing wrong with what he had done. Isaac wanted to claw the cocky smile from the man's face, he wanted to gouge Liam's eyes out and make him understand true agony for having taken him and his son, but restrained as he was, the best that he could do was aim a kick for the man's torso.

Liam's distance and the debilitating pain that Isaac felt when he moved made the kick less than effective, but it made Liam scowl.

"You know, baby, domestic violence isn't something that I want to raise our son around."

"Sergei isn't your son!" Isaac shouted. "He's mine! I raised him! I changed his diapers and suffered to provide for him! You will never be anything to him except the man who hurt his papa, vy chertovski psikho (you fucking psycho)!"

Liam didn't seem phased, though. He grabbed Isaac's ankles and held them while he slid into bed next to Isaac. The small vibrations on the bed making Isaac wince.

"You were willing to let that fucking cop around our son, and how did he repay you? He betrayed your trust-."

"To protect me from you." Isaac snarled, realizing that what Jordan had done was saint-like compared to what he was suffering under Liam. "He did what he did to shield me from those fucking creepy-ass letters that you were sending me, and compared to this, Liam? Compared to being handcuffed to bed, raped, and kept from my son? I'm am completely siding with him."

"Baby, please don't call our lovemaking 'rape'. It hurts my feelings when you say that." Liam said with a pout in his voice.

"Drop dead." Isaac retorted.

"Isaac, I don't know what else I can do. Ya uznal yazyk (I learned your language), I sent you flowers and gifts, I learned how to shoot, since that's

obviously something you like, and I'm taking care of Sergei."

The conversation was like a married couple's bittersweet arguments, and it made Isaac retch, again. The familiarity was something that he couldn't stand above all. That Liam presumed that he had any place in his life, as though he had a right to Sergei. It was soul-crushing and awakened a spark of anger in Isaac. Isaac wanted to be left alone, he wanted Sergei safe, and to make Liam shut up, he took a deep breath and knocked his head back with as much force as he could muster. A darker side of him imagined broken nasal bones driving into the frontal lobe causing death, but all that happened is that Liam let out an angry grunt as he toppled backwards off of the bed. Isaac figured that it was for the best, there was no guarantee that Jordan would be able to find them before they starved to death if Liam was dead.

"You know..." Liam began, standing up. His face was covered in blood, and Isaac couldn't stop the vindictive smile, even if his head did feel worse from the blow. Liam made a disgusting hocking sound, before spitting a mouthful of blood onto the carpet. "I was going to give you a surprise, baby, but no one, not even someone as cute as you deserves anything after a display of violence like that." He moved towards the bedside table and pulled out another syringe, making Isaac tense.

"I'm sorry, I...I just want my son, and I want to go home...please." Isaac begged, trying to move away, though he achieved nothing but more pain.

Perhaps vindictively, Liam jabbed the needle into Isaac's neck, making him cry out, before he once again, felt the drug pulling him into darkness. It was a merciful thing, as he felt his pain draining from him slowly, though it was not without fear. As he closed his eyes, he saw Liam pull a knife from the same drawer the syringe was kept in, though he found himself too weak to call out or even care.

Jordan

Jordan let out a frustrated cry as he beat his desk with a fist. If the other officers heard him, they didn't say anything, and only John had the courage to look up with a raised eyebrow, though Jordan didn't care.

Isaac and Sergei had been gone for twelve hours, and so far, they had found nothing to help them find out where. Sergei's phone had been left at Stiles' house, and Isaac had been dropped on the road, just at the town's limits.

Jordan's one hope had been the cellphones, praying beyond reason that whoever had taken Isaac had not thought to take them away, but it had led them to the same place that all their other leads had: nowhere.

Jordan was at a loss for how to proceed, and the longer that Isaac was missing, the more he felt as though he'd never get him back.

"Alright, soldier, it's time for you to go home." John's voice snapped Jordan from his thoughts and made him look up. John was standing in the doorway of Jordan's office with his arms crossed.

Jordan snorted and turned his eyes back to the notes that the stalker had sent, hoping to find something...anything that they might have missed that would help him find Isaac.

"I wasn't kidding, deputy. You're tired, we're all tired, and-."

"I'm not...look, I couldn't sleep even if I was at home, and I'd just be laying there, worrying about Isaac, so I might as well be here."

"Jordan," John sighed, looking weary, "He's important to me, too, and I get-."

"No, you don't!" Jordan snapped. "Yes, he's your 'nephew' and whatever, I *love* him, and I mean, really, *really*, love him, and it's just...not the same thing for you. If it was Stiles, or...even Claudia. If Claudia had gone missing...you look me in the eye, and tell me that you'd just go home to sleep."

John had a hurt look on his face, which awakened a guilt within Jordan's chest, but he ignored it. The only way for John to understand what he was feeling was for Jordan to bring up the woman that John loved as much as Jordan loved Isaac.

There would be time for apologies and rest after Isaac was safe in his arms.

"I'm not leaving. If I get too tired, I can nap at my desk, but John...you can't ask me to leave."

“As your boss, I should send you home, anyway, but as your friend, and as his uncle...you can stay.”

“Thanks.” Jordan said, turning back to his work. He had planned on staying unless John had physically thrown him out, and he knew that the sheriff didn’t have it in him to do such a thing.

John knew the importance of getting Isaac and Sergei back, and Jordan knew that neither of them would ever forgive themselves if Isaac died when they could have done just one thing more.

Nothing new popped out to Jordan while he went over the notes, again, but he read and reread them, trying to find an answer.

Jordan scrubbed his hands over his face, jostling his desk. When he heard the rustle of paper, he looked up to see that he had knocked over a pile of photos from a stack of things that had been forgotten in his search for Isaac. They were the red light violations that Jordan was supposed to write tickets for, and in his weariness, he let out a humorless chuckle at the thought of such a simple existence. The days when all he had to worry about were people running a red light seemed ages ago, even though Isaac had only been gone for less than a day.

Jordan felt his eyes burn as he scooped up the photos, a feeling of utter failing bring forth tears. He had promised, he had sworn to both Isaac and Sergei that he would always keep them safe, and he had failed. The consequences were something that he was not prepared for. It was one thing for Isaac to have kicked him out, and Jordan was willing to still suffer that particular punishment after Isaac was returned to where he belonged, but it quite another for the man to be just...gone.

Jordan sat back down at his desk as he sobbed openly, not caring who saw him. Though it had been a long time since he had wept, the loss of Isaac was something that seemed to demand it. Sergei wasn’t his son and Isaac had only been a boyfriend, but he felt their disappearances like a man who had lost a son and husband.

Jordan wiped his eyes and reorganized the pictures back into their manageable piles, before something caught his eye. Though the picture was blurry, Jordan was able to make out a man in the passenger seat of one of the cars, his hair was reminiscent of Isaac’s, and while it brought a pang to Jordan’s heart to see it, it

brought something else:

A plan.

“John!” Jordan shouted, taking the photo and running into his office. John looked startled, but Jordan ignored it to shove the picture at him.

“That’s not him, Jordan.” John said, sounding concerned as though Jordan had lost his mind. Jordan understood that he was being...enthusiastic, but if he was right, it would lead them to Isaac, which was all that mattered at the end of the day.

“I know. I know, but the picture’s clear enough that you can tell that it’s not him.”

“Jordan, he would’ve...I mean, unless he ran the red light.” John said, slowly...hesitantly, as though he was trying to spare Jordan’s feelings.

“If you had just kidnapped a man and his son, wouldn’t you be in a rush?” Jordan asked, refusing to let John’s attitude get him down. At the moment, he had no other options, and if he gave up hope...he’s die.

“It’s a long shot...” John said, but taking the photo.

“It’s the only shot I have, sir. I’m...if he dies...” Jordan let his sentence drop, but John nodded as though he grasped what was being said.

Notes for the Chapter:

I hate leaving you guys hanging so here you go.
I hate spoilers, but I will say that this arc isn't short.
That's all for now. :) Thank you all for all the comments.

56. Happy Family

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac gets to see Sergei

Notes for the Chapter:

TRIGGER WARNINGS

Isaac

Isaac's headache returned when he awoke, again, as did the burn in his throat from a lack of water. He debated, briefly, whether to ask Liam for sustenance, and to make sure that Sergei was being taken care of, but knew that while he might be willing to die in stubbornness to the man, he couldn't allow Sergei to suffer the same fate.

"Liam!" He called out, his voice scratchy from having not used it and from a lack of water.

"Yes, baby, what do you need?" Liam asked, sweetly, walking into the room.

Isaac's stomach churned, but there was nothing for him to throw up. He managed to not implode in disgust when Liam rubbed his hair, and looked up.

"Sergei...are you feeding him and giving him water?"

"Aw, are you thirsty, baby?"

Isaac nodded. "And if I am, Sergei will be, too. I need to know that you're taking care of him."

"I promise to always take care of our son, Isaac. He's refusing to eat, but he's drinking the water I gave him."

Isaac let out a sigh of relief, but a throb in his head made him think of what Liam had already done to him.

“Did you drug him?” He asked, not at all liking the sly smile that crossed Liam’s face.

“I didn’t ‘drug’ him, baby, I just gave him a little something to make him less fussy. It’s no different than rubbing whisky on a teething toddler.”

Isaac felt his stomach clench. Liam had given Sergei some drug, and he couldn’t even check to make sure that he was alright.

“What did you do?” He hissed in a low voice.

“Shh, baby, he’s alright, he wants to see you, and I’m willing to let that happen, but you need to eat first.”

“Water.” Isaac said, not willing to eat unless he knew Sergei had.

“Isaac, I wasn’t kidding.” Liam said, pulling on a serious face. “I’m not going to date an anorexic. You need to eat.”

“Not until Sergei does, and not until I know that you aren’t going to poison us. Just water.”

“Do you really think that I’d go to all the trouble to have you and then just... poison you?” Liam asked in a chuckle which made Isaac cringe. “Isaac, I love you, and I’m trying to do what I can to make sure that you can see that you love me, too, that we belong together...Everything that I’ve done for you-.”

“You kidnapped me and my son, you sent me panic-attack causing notes, and you fucking *stalked* me, Liam. That’s...that’s not how you start a relationship.” Isaac snarled.

“You’re only looking at it bad because that stupid cop poisoned you against me. If he hadn’t...you’d see how much we care about each other.”

Isaac wanted to argue, he wanted to scream, and fight. He wanted to rip Liam’s throat out with his teeth and pull his tongue out backwards, but he couldn’t...He had to stay on his best behavior so that he could convince Liam to give him his son, so he could make sure that he was eating.

“Let me see Sergei, I can get him to eat. You said that you care about him.”

“I do, I love Sergei, baby.”

Isaac screamed internally, but managed to keep himself from saying anything that would ruin his plan. He was betraying himself and Jordan, but it was his son, so he knew that if he ever saw Jordan, again, the man would understand.

Jordan was so understanding and Isaac had ruined everything by leaving him in the dust.

“Then bring him to me so I can make sure that he eats, please. Give me my son, I’d...I’d never survive if he got sick from not eating.” What he actually meant was that if Sergei died, he’d die, too, but he could hardly think the words without wanting to cry, let alone make them concrete by saying them, out loud.

“If I bring him...you won’t be sad anymore, baby?”

Isaac was beyond sad, beyond fury, he was around the point when he’d be willing to shoot Liam without a second thought if he had access to a firearm, but for the sake of his son, he nodded.

Liam got up from the bed and left the room, making Isaac feel anxious. He would be reunited with Sergei, soon, and he knew that he would feel better with his son in his arms.

“Papa!” Sergei cried. Liam was holding his hand, which sent a paternalistic shudder through Isaac as he held his arms out. Sergei broke the hold and jumped into the bed, pressing himself against Isaac, who realized that he couldn’t hold his son with the handcuffs. He struggled fruitlessly as he tried to examine Sergei for any wounds. He seemed fine, but he was crying into Isaac’s shirt.

“Papa, ya khochu domoy. Ya ne lyublyu yego zdes'. (I want to go home. I do not like it here.)”

Sergei’s Russian was a sure sign that he was uncomfortable where he was.

“Ya znayu, no my sobirayemsya vybrat'sya otsyuda, ya obeshchayu . (I know, but we are going to get out of here, I promise.)”

“Isaac, baby, this isn’t what we agreed on, if you’re going to tell him these things, I’ll take him away.” Liam said, narrowing his eyes. Isaac had forgotten

that Liam claimed to speak Russian, and if he had indeed understood what Isaac had said, there was no doubt that he'd like it.

"Please...please, don't take him, again." Isaac begged. "I'll do whatever you want."

"Get him to eat, like you said you would."

Isaac nodded, desperate for more time with Sergei. He moved his chin in the only embrace that he could give him. He hated that Sergei had to through the machinations of a psycho like Liam, but there was nothing that he could do, except do as he had promised, and get Sergei to eat.

"Sergei, I need you to eat." Isaac whispered.

"Papa, ty skazal mne, chtoby nikogda ne prinimat' pishchu ot postoronnikh. (You told me never to take food from strangers.)"

"I know what I told you, but I'm telling you that it's okay. It's...Sergei..." Isaac sighed, hating himself for basically yelling his son that it was okay to take food from a man who had proved willing to harm him. "Remember when we were poor?"

Sergei nodded and wiped his eyes.

"I didn't let you go hungry then, and I'm not going to let you go hungry now. You need to eat."

"I'll make you whatever you want, son." Liam said, *touching* Sergei's hair, which made Isaac shudder in horror.

He was proud of his son when Sergei shifted himself away from Liam's touch.

"Papa, pochemu on menya nazyvayut yego syn? On sdela' eto ran'she, tozhe. (Why did he call me his son? He did it earlier, too.)"

"Sergei, I promise to explain one day, but...for now, just go and get something to eat." Isaac said, thoroughly disgusted with himself.

"No (But)-." Sergei began, but Isaac shook his head.

“Go with Liam and get some food.” He repeated.

Sergei nodded and moved to get up, but hugged Isaac, first. He stayed where he was, his eyes travelling up to the handcuffs that kept Isaac from hugging his son.

“Papa, vy v bede (Are you in trouble)?”

“No, Sergei, I just...” Isaac’s eyes met Liam’s in an attempt to get the man to explain why he could hug his *son*.

“Your papa was having a nightmare, and was moving around a lot. I told you that I would take care of him, Sergei, and I did. I just didn’t want him to hurt himself.”

“Ty prosnulsya, tak skazat', yego snyat' ikh. Ya ne lyublyu ikh. (You’re awake now, tell him to take them off. I don’t like them.)” Sergei said, crossing his arms.

“He has a point.” Isaac said, glaring at Liam.

With Sergei looking at Isaac, Liam lifted up his shirt, revealing a gun which made Isaac’s heart drop, though not as much as when Liam pointed it at the back of Sergei’s head. Isaac was forced to keep a calm façade to keep Sergei in the dark, but he panicked. The inner protector that couldn’t bear to see Sergei threatened screamed out in agony as he watch Liam train a weapon at his only son.

“But we’re going to have to keep an eye on you and make sure that you don’t do anything that could hurt you or Sergei, right, baby?” Liam asked in a drawling voice.

His eyes wide in horror, Isaac nodded. He knew what Liam was threatening: It was all well and good for him to pretend that they were in love and the Sergei was his, but Liam apparently knew when to draw the line in his delusion. He knew that Isaac would try to run, and had shown what the consequences would be if he did.

Liam put the gun back into his waistband and pulled a key from his pocket. Leaning forward, he unlocked Isaac’s wrists, but not before pressing a sloppy kiss to his mouth. Isaac dearly wished that he would have vomited right into his mouth, but his stomach had nothing to offer but knots.

Sergei held his hand out to Isaac, but Isaac couldn't move. Underneath his blanket, he was still nude from whatever Liam had done to him, and while he nursed his aching wrists, he made an apologetic face to his son.

"I'll join you in a minute. I promise." He whispered, pulling Sergei closer, and placing a kiss on his forehead.

Sergei seemed hesitant to leave the room, but did so when Liam took his hand and led him out.

Isaac took the moment alone to cry, the tears rolling out with hardly any thought at all as he considered the gravity of what Liam had threatened. To a man who was obviously lacking in critical mental stability, it would have been nothing for him to pull the trigger, and end Sergei's life, and Isaac didn't know what he could do to protect his son. They were prisoners of Liam's. Subject to his every whim and crazy desire.

Isaac did know that at the very least, he could follow his son into the kitchen, like he had promised. If he could not stop Liam, he could at the very least be near Sergei, and take the bullet for him if the situation arose.

Moving was agony. Every limping step that Isaac took was excruciating and brought with it a wave of nausea. The sexual assault that he had suffered under Liam had done damage, and Isaac knew that he was probably making it worse by walking, but he had no recourse, except to walk. The thing that kept him going, the one bright spot for his life was the thought that he would be able to protect Sergei, and the hope that Jordan wouldn't leave them there for too long.

Isaac found his clothes on the floor, but took a moment to look at himself in the mirror before he got dressed.

Even when he had been living under his father, Isaac had never been in such pain, though he knew he had definitely had more bruises in his past. His hips were a deep purple, perfectly outlining Liam's tight grip. Isaac knew his body well enough to know that they would slowly fade into blotchy yellow, before disappearing completely.

Isaac had also learned under his father's cruel hand how to hide bruises so that people who weren't meant to would never see them, and Isaac was happy with their placement if nothing else, because it would mean that he would be able to

hide them from Sergei by wearing any clothes.

Isaac slid on his shirt and his jeans, deciding against boxers to leave his sore and bleeding hole as much room as he could offer, before heading back out into the kitchen.

The scene was sickeningly domestic: Liam had a hardwood table, complete with three chairs, and beautiful china place settings. There was a cheerful, calla lily bouquet in the middle of the table, and Isaac felt as though he was walking into something that was textbook family. He could see himself in the same position with Jordan, only happy instead of terrified. Sergei was seated at one of the chairs, his body tense while he looked down at his plate, waiting for Liam, who was setting dishes on the table.

Notes for the Chapter:

So...this is what the darkest of my characters do. For me, having Liam even threaten Sergei makes him worse than Peter in *I Need A Hero* or Aiden in *Forced to Bear*. So, I consider this to be my darkest fic, if only for what happened in this chapter.

A side note: I changed the title of the *Blind!Stiles* fic to: *At Last I See the Light*. I watched *Tangled*, and that song actually covers what I want to happen between Jackson and Stiles pretty perfectly.

As always, I will post when I can.

And thank you all.

57. Righteous Anger

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac continues to suffer under Liam while Jordan tries to find him.

Isaac

“Ah, baby, I need to do laundry.” Liam said, looking up while they ate blini. A small note of contention on Isaac’s part was how disgusting they tasted, something that was mirrored in Sergei’s expression while he ate... “After dinner, you can take a shower, and I’ll give you some clothes.”

Isaac numbly nodded, looking around the house they were in, trying to glean any clue as to where they were.

It was single story, and rather well kept, though nothing on the level of where he lived with Stiles. It was certainly far more than Isaac had been expecting. When had had pictured his stalker, it had frequently been someone crouching in a filthy den with boarded windows, maybe a fire in an oil drum, or moldy carpet, but even if Liam was a the most repulsive person Isaac had ever seen, the house wasn’t a hell hole, which was surprising.

“Do what you have to.” Isaac responded to Liam’s comment. Having eaten a little and drinking three glassfuls of water, he felt his resentment coming back, though he knew that he would have to keep his behavior in check in order to keep Sergei under his watch.

“Normal people say thank you when one offers them something.”

“Spasibo. (Thank you.)” Isaac spat.

“Do you really want to raise Sergei with that attitude, Isaac?”

“I’ve raised the best son in the world on my own for seven years, I know what’s best for him.”

“But now’s the time that we’re going to raise him together, and your attitude is inappropriate.” Liam said with a chuckle that made the hairs on Isaac’s neck

stand up. “I think that we should just try and have a nice dinner together.”

“Eto protivnyy. (These are yucky.)” Sergei said, pushing his plate away.

“Sergei, you promised you papa that you would eat.” Liam said, raising an eyebrow at him.

“Yeda, ne der'mo. (Food, not shit.)” Sergei mumbled, and though Isaac firmly believed that Sergei shouldn't cuss, he couldn't find it in him to chastise him. In fact, Isaac was sure that there was a small, vindictive smirk playing on his lips.

“Sergei, if you speak like that again, I'll lock you in that room away from your papa for a week.” Liam snapped, making any joy Isaac felt evaporate, instantly.

“Papa!” Sergei shouted, moving from his chair and running into Isaac's side. Isaac wasted no time in wrapping his arms around his son.

“I'm so sorry, Sergei. Jordan will save us.” Isaac whispered before Liam got up.

“Sit down and eat, Sergei.” Liam said, his voice sharp, no façade of happiness in his voice. Isaac was quickly learning that Liam couldn't stand for his illusion to be ruined for long, and that forced Isaac to wonder when it would be too much for Liam to handle before he decided that he'd rather have the fantasy in his head.

“Vy ne mozhetе vzyat' menya s papa! (You can't take me from my papa!)” Sergei yelled, burying his face in Isaac's chest.

Liam's sneered and he reached into his waistband, but Isaac held his hands up.

“Please, Liam, no!” Isaac shouted, using his hand to keep Sergei from looking. “He'll eat, I promise, please don't!”

Liam ignored him and grabbed Sergei's hair, roughly pulling it back. With his other hand, he pulled out the gun and pressed it to Isaac's head. Isaac froze. He had accepted that Liam might kill him, it was obvious from the unstable nature of the man that he might snap and do something fatal to him, but Isaac didn't want it to happen in front of his son. Sergei didn't need that particular psychological scar.

“Do you see this, son? It’s called a gun, and if you don’t get back in your chair, I’ll pull the trigger and kill your papa, and that will take you away from him.”

Sergei sat, frozen in fear as he looked up at the weapon.

“Liam, please, he’s...he’s too young, don’t do this.”

“We will sit down and be a family, or he can watch you die. It’s his decision.” Liam said, uncaring and cold.

Sergei nearly stumbled getting down from Isaac’s lap, but he ran to his chair and sat down, pulling the plate back towards himself.

Isaac had not thought it possible for Liam to lose control so fast, but he made a vow to watch his temper and attitude, if only for Sergei’s sake.

“So...shower after dinner?” Liam said as he sat back down, his cheery tone back.

Isaac nodded. “Yes.”

Jordan

The gods had smiled down on Jordan, at least partially.

Seeing Isaac passed out in the passenger seat of the man’s car was painful, but Jordan now had a color and model to go off of, as well as a blurry image of the stalker.

Even in the low quality, Jordan could make out a distinguishing mark that immediately told him who he was looking at. The man in the driver’s seat had a scar running across his face...

Just like Kevin.

Jordan had just *known* that there was something off about the stuttering orderly. There was an ill air about him, and it had been that that Jordan had no doubt reacted to when he had been so protective of Isaac that day in the hospital.

Jordan felt relieved that they had something more solid to work on, but it did not assuage his guilt in the least. Knowing who they were after did not put Isaac back in his arms, though, he had work to do in order to get Isaac and Sergei to safety.

“John!” He called, his voice a bit hoarse from lack of sleep.

John looked worse than Jordan felt, though. His eyes were red and ringed, and he shuffled his feet as he entered Jordan’s office.

“You got somethin’?”

“This.” Jordan said, holding out the picture.

John took it, his eyes narrowing and the muscles in his jaw tensing when he no doubt recognized Isaac.

“Kevin.” He bit out. “Call Melissa, she needs to know, I’ll run the car.”

Jordan nodded and pulled out his cell phone, surprised to find a text from Derek. Desperate as he was to find Isaac, he didn’t know how he could have missed it, though it thankfully didn’t contain anything new or dire, it was simply a reminder that they were still looking, and asking if he had any information.

Jordan shared only what he dared, not only wanting to keep himself from violating protocol, which would leave him in a lot of trouble, but also to protect Derek and Stiles from the unknown threat of Kevin. The stuttering orderly may have seemed shy and unassuming, but he had taken both Isaac and Sergei, he might have been tougher than he seemed.

He also had told them to go to Matt and have him fill in any more of the blanks. Time was precious and though Jordan felt the smallest smidgeon of guilt for thinking it, he cared far more about finding Isaac using his new lead than he did about Derek’s vigilante attitude.

After dealing with Derek, Jordan found the hospital’s number, and dialed.

“Beacon Hills Memorial, this is Theo, how can I help you?” A cheerful, male voice answered. It contrasted so much with Jordan’s current mood that he scowled. That there could be any happiness in the world felt wrong.

“This is Jordan Parrish with the sheriff’s department. I’m looking for an orderly that works there, his name is Kevin.”

“You’re looking for Kevin?” Theo repeated, sounding surprised. *“What did he do?”*

“I’m not at liberty to say, but it’s imperative that I find out where he is.”

“I can access the hospital’s records and give you his address?” Theo offered, still sounding unbearably jolly.

“That’s what I’m calling for. I’ll also need his phone number and a conversation with Melissa McCall.”

“Yes, sir. I...” He paused. *“Uh...”*

“What’s wrong?” Jordan growled.

“I’m new, but...I’m pretty sure that I need a warrant before I release this to you.”

Jordan slammed his fist on the desk, irritated with the lack of proper information in the general public. It wasn’t like it was a hard thing to understand one’s rights.

“No. *He* needs a warrant for me to enter his residence, the location of that residence is not protected, so quit trying to understand the law, and do what I asked.” He snapped. “Because, while you are woefully ignorant in how it works, *I* am not, and *I will* have you arrested for obstruction of justice.”

“I’m sorry, sir, I just...I’ve never done this before.” Jordan could have sworn he heard Theo pissing himself, though he cared little about scaring an administrative assistant. He would do everything within his power to find Isaac.

“The address, Theo.”

“An apartment on Prescott Street. His information doesn’t have the name, but I think those are The-.”

“Overlook Apartments.” Jordan interrupted, knowing the complex only too well. From the moment that Theo had said Prescott Street, he knew where Isaac was:

His own apartment complex.

“What apartment number?” Jordan asked.

“Number sixteen.”

“Thank you. What about his phone number?”

“Uh...” Theo searched for a moment, before answering. *“Five, five, five, two, six, eight, zero.”*

Jordan had no intention of calling Kevin, but he needed a backup in case the apartment turned up empty. Kevin might have very well taken Isaac to another location, one that wasn't in his records. He certainly seemed smart enough to keep all evidence of his involvement from Jordan and the other officers. They had not been able to trace any of the 'gifts' to him, but Jordan didn't need his DNA, anymore. He had the fucker's address and a way to track him if that failed.

Jordan didn't let out a sigh of relief, too wary of the potential variables that could still cause things to go bad, but he did feel better enough to apologize to Theo.

“I'm sorry for snapping at you. This is...a very big issue for me.”

“I'm just glad I could help. Did you still want to speak with Melissa?”

“Yes, please.”

Jordan was put on hold, the elevator music even worse than Theo's bright attitude, and he found himself tapping his toe in frustration as he waited.

“Jordan, did you find him.”

Jordan wasn't surprised that the story had spread around those that cared about Isaac so quickly, but it made him feel even worse when he truthfully said:

“No, but we have a lead, and I'm praying it takes us to him.”

“If you didn't...Jordan, why did you call?”

“Because I don’t know what condition he’ll be in when I do, and also, because it was Kevin, so I-.”

“Kevin, as in...Kevin Norrland? That’s...that’s not possible.”

“Why not?” Jordan asked with a groan, wondering if there had been some mistake, if he had wanted so badly to find Isaac that he had implicated an innocent.

“You met him, he’s not...Jordan, he’s not the kidnapping type.”

If that was all she had, Jordan wasn’t convinced. “Melissa, I have a picture, and I’m ninety percent sure that it’s him, so unless you’ve got something more than the way that he looks, I’m heading out.”

“If it is him, do whatever it takes to get them back.”

Jordan didn’t need to be told, he didn’t need any encouragement. He was going to do whatever was necessary to get Isaac back, not matter who had to die for him to do it.

Notes for the Chapter:

So...yeah, this happened.

I’ll have you know that I am have finished writing the stalker arc, so you’ll be getting that in a few days. In the meantime, please only throw ripe tomatoes as the green ones hurt.

58. Grandson

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac sidesteps an angry Liam and Jordan reaches more answers

Isaac

“You’re beautiful, you know?” Liam whispered as he ran his fingers through Isaac’s hair. They were sitting in Liam’s living room, with Sergei’s face buried in Isaac’s chest, an occasional snuffle coming from him. Isaac had tried and failed to keep Sergei protected from having to face the true face of Liam’s psychopathy, and Sergei was suffering the consequences. Isaac didn’t know what to do to make his son feel better, and the helplessness was worse than anything.

“Thank you for the compliment.” Isaac bit out. “You must...really like me.”

“More than like. I love you, baby.” Liam said, enthusiastically.

“Then let us go?” Isaac asked, his voice cracking. “*Please*, Liam.”

Liam chuckled. “Of course, not. I’ve waited so long for us to be a happy family, and I’m not going to lose you, now.”

Isaac sighed, his ability to keep himself calm slipping through his fingers. If he fell to a panic attack, he had no idea how it would affect Sergei...and he would be unable to protect him.

Not that he had done a good job in the first place. Isaac was still shaken up about how flippant and careless Liam had been with the firearm, first pointing it at Sergei himself, and then at Isaac in threat.

“Liam, if you really care about us, you’ll realize that what’s happening isn’t conducive to family life. You...you threatened me in front of my son.”

“And I’m sorry about that, baby.” Liam said with a chuckle, something that made Isaac’s skin crawl. Liam was behaving as though he had done something minor, and the nonchalance was the most frightening thing of all.

“If you’re really sorry, you’ll let us go. I’ll talk to Jordan, keep charges from being pressed, but we-.”

“Are going to be a family, and you’ll learn to be happy here, both of you will.” Liam said, his tone hardening a little, which Isaac took as a sign to back off, until he found another chance.

“Okay, Liam, calm down, I’m sorry.”

“Just...” Liam sighed. “Stop talking about leaving. You’re not leaving, ever. We can be happy, I can make you happy, you just have to give me the chance.”

A chance to be raped, beaten, shot, or see his son threatened, again, half of which he had already experienced.

“Liam, he’s terrified.” Isaac whispered, pointing to Sergei. “You can’t...If you’re going to keep us here, we have to do better to make him feel safe and comforted.”

“You let Jordan bring a gun around him.” Liam argued as though it was an acceptable excuse for what he had done. Isaac wanted to gouge his eyes out and run with Sergei, but he nodded, and played along.

“Jordan never aimed it at him or his father.” Isaac said, managing to keep a façade of calmness.

“That was...I’m just nervous, baby. You’re...you’re so beautiful and perfect, and I just want to do good for you. When you say that you want to leave, it makes me...it makes me mad, and I panic.”

It was probably a logical explanation to Liam, though it scared the hell out of Isaac. It was a fragile and unstable dynamic and he didn’t know how he would be able to pull himself and Sergei through.

He knew that Jordan was looking for him. He knew Jordan well enough to guess that he probably had the entire sheriff’s department as well as Derek and Stiles helping out, but he didn’t even know where he was, and Liam had evaded capture for so long that it made him seriously question whether he would live to see any of his friends or his boyfriend, again.

He decided that above all, he needed to get Sergei through. He would do whatever it took to make sure that Sergei survived as long as possible, which meant not stoking Liam's anger when he saw it, and not letting Sergei provoke him, either. They both had to keep cool and calm heads, and they might, with a little help, pull through to make it to the other side of the darkness that they were in.

"Seryozha, son, I'm sorry for what I did." Liam said, ruffling Sergei's hair. As usual, it made Isaac cringe to see Liam touching his son, but he didn't speak about it, he didn't growl, scream, kick, cry out, or stab Jordan with Buddha statue on the coffee table. He sat still and let Liam do what he needed to in order to keep him in a good mood.

"You wanted to hurt my papa. You're a bad man." Sergei grunted, not moving his head to even look up at Liam.

Isaac had no way of communicating the need for them to placate Liam to his son. Liam understood Russian, or enough to know what Isaac was saying. At the same time, he didn't want to confuse Sergei by letting him think that Isaac actually felt anything but cold rage at Liam. The only thing he could do was take the middle ground:

"Sergei, remember your manners."

"But, papa-." Sergei began, looking up at him, wounded.

"No, Sergei, you need to...be nice." Chastising Sergei for mistreating their kidnapper was one of the hardest things Isaac had ever had to do.

"So...friends?" Liam asked, holding out a hand.

Sergei looked at Isaac, who tried to give his son an apologetic look as he nodded.

Sergei took the hand, no doubt confused as to why Isaac was accepting of Liam, and he had every right to be. Liam was the worst type of person, and someone didn't need to be as smart as Sergei to see that what was happening was extremely unusual, and Isaac was going to have to spend a long time reversing the brainwashing that he was putting on his son, himself...if they ever got away.

"You don't how long I've waited for this." Liam said, having the audacity to

sound *choked up*. He looked as though he had indeed been waiting for a long time to simply have a reciprocated relationship with Sergei, though if anything, that made Isaac feel more uncomfortable.

Thankfully, at least as far as Isaac was concerned, Sergei quickly let go of Liam's hand, and placed himself against Isaac's side, once again.

"I can't make him like you." Isaac said, worried that Liam would punish one or both of them for Sergei correctly following his instincts.

"He'll get there. He was a very big boy for taking that step." Liam said in an obnoxiously sweet voice, a tone Isaac had not adopted since Sergei was in diapers.

"I'm not a baby." Sergei grumbled, but low enough so that only Isaac could hear. Isaac gave Sergei a reassuring pat on the back, though didn't dare say anything.

They could reach a balance, and they would, even if it meant Isaac had to die. It was the most important thing in the world that Sergei was taken care of, and he knew that even if Liam's anger led to his death, that Stiles and Derek would take him in and ensure that he was raised right.

Or Jordan. Jordan had promised to look after Sergei if anything happened to him, and Isaac knew that even after their fight, he could trust Jordan to uphold that promise.

The situation he had been in with Jordan had reached the levels where Isaac saw a family in their grouping, especially when Sergei had been in the hospital, and his friends had all surrounded them with love and tenderness.

The family picture that the three of them struck now was macabre and grotesque. It was a rapist and kidnapper in the nurturing role, which violated everything that kept Isaac grounded. He didn't want his son to be raised by a man who was willing to flaunt a gun like a toy and who treated drugged rape as something that just happened.

Isaac wondered if he could summon the courage to try and escape. He'd need some luck, but if he had a moment where he was alone with Liam, and not chained to a bed, he could take the risk to try and tackle the man, and take his gun. He'd have to ensure that no matter what, he only struck if he could ensure

that Sergei wouldn't be harmed in any way, which meant that he'd probably never find an acceptable opening. But Isaac knew that he didn't want his son to be raised in the environment that they were currently in.

Jordan

Jordan knew, even as he pulled into the parking lot of his apartment complex, that it was the wrong location. Whether by Theo's own subterfuge or by Kevin's earlier machinations, someone had lied, and it had brought Jordan to the wrong apartment. There was no way that Kevin was keeping Isaac and Sergei in such a tight enclosure. Jordan felt stupid for not realizing earlier that unless Kevin had both of his victims gagged constantly, it would be hard for the neighbors not to notice.

Despite having spent most of his past two months with Isaac at Stiles', he liked to think that if he saw two kidnap victims being hauled into his neighbor's apartment, he'd at the very least call anonymously.

Still, he had a lead, and he wasn't abandoning it on a hunch. He kept his hand on his gun as he knocked on the familiar wood of his neighbor's door.

Jordan felt his heart drop when he saw the old woman with graying hair in a nightgown answer the door.

"Deputy Parrish, is that you?" She asked, squinting her cloudy eyes at him.

Jordan sighed, and tried to hold back the sob that hitched his breathing. "Yes." He whispered.

"I'm...I'm not in trouble, are I?" She asked, reaching her shaky hands up.

Jordan felt a spark of guilt for having bothered such an innocent old woman, but he still wanted to exhaust any possibility that her residence contained Isaac and Sergei.

"No, ma'am, I'm following a lead on a young man and his son, both of whom were kidnapped. The person wanted in relation to the crime gave your address as his residence."

“You think that I allow such people into my home?” She asked, sounding a little defensive.

“No, ma’am, of course not, but I have to follow every lead. He’s...the man that was kidnapped is very important to me.”

Jordan really didn’t care about whether or not he had shared too personal information, but the small smile that crossed her lips told Jordan that she took his meaning.

“Young love...” She said, reaching a veined hand up to brush some of her silvery hair from her eyes. “I’m sorry that I cannot be of more help, officer.”

“Actually, you can ma’am. I...you’re not a suspect, but this residence was listed as his, and I’d like to come in, and have a look around.” Jordan reached into his pocket, prepared to pull out the warrant that would allow him to enter her home if she resisted, but she waved him in.

“Of course, darling, come in.”

Jordan was shocked for a moment by the woman’s house. The walls were painted in a bright pink and bore shelves upon shelves of collector plates featuring a cartoon cat that Jordan couldn’t identify.

Jordan was quickly pulled from his surroundings when his eyes glanced at the woman’s fireplace. On the mantle, she had a number of family photos. Some showed her with a woman, who looked to be her daughter, if Jordan was to guess. There was another showing her hugging a small dog, underneath which were the words: *Paulie 1990-2005*, but it was the third that caught Jordan’s attention.

It was the old woman, the woman that Jordan assumed to be her daughter, and a man with a scar across his handsome face.

“That’s my grandson, Liam.” She said, noticing how long he was staring at it.

It was hard for Jordan to see the man in such a setting. He was...simply a man, taking a picture with his family, and yet...he was capable of such a brutal act that Jordan was living with the very real possibility of having lost Isaac forever.

Jordan was incensed, seeing the man who was responsible for their pain, simply sitting there looking completely innocent. He had purposely planted his grandmother's address to keep people from tracking him, he had threatened Jordan's friends, and kidnapped his boyfriend, as well as the child that he was coming to view as his son, and he was...happy.

It was cruel and it was unfair. Jordan was distraught and he didn't know where he was supposed to go from there.

"Deputy, is something wrong?" The woman asked, jumping when Jordan spun around, anger on his face.

"Where is your grandson?" He snarled.

Notes for the Chapter:

Moving along.

59. You Always Hurt the Ones You Claim to Love.

Summary for the Chapter:

Things come to a head with Liam

Isaac

“Sergei, I think it’s your bed time.” Liam said in a sing-songy voice. Isaac shuddered and looked at the clock the Liam had on the wall, he was still hardly able to believe that Liam lived in such a *normal* looking home.

It was nine, the time that Isaac did usually send Sergei to bed, and Isaac didn’t have to ask how Liam knew that.

“Papa, can I sleep with you?” Sergei asked, something not at all surprising.

Isaac opened his mouth to say ‘yes’, but Liam shook his head.

“You’re a little old for that, don’t you think?”

Isaac forgot, for a moment, that he was supposed to be on his best behavior when it came to Liam.

“I’m all he has...especially now, I’ve always let him sleep with me when he’s nervous.”

“He has to grow up sometime, baby.” Liam said, his voice still light, which Isaac took as a sign that he could continue to argue, perhaps even play at Liam’s wants.

“Liam, you said that you wanted to be a family, part of which is learning that it isn’t always like it is in books. Sometimes...sometimes your son,” Isaac nearly gagged on the word, but the closer Sergei was, the better he’d feel, “sometimes he’ll want to stay with me...us.”

“Isaac, I’d be very upset if you were trying to trick me.” Liam warned, and even though he was smiling, Isaac took the threat very seriously. He wasn’t trying to trick Liam, exactly, he just wanted to make Sergei as comfortable as possible.

“Liam, you were spying on me-.”

“Keeping an eye on you.” He corrected. “I was just making sure that nothing happened.”

“Right...The point is that you must have seen that half of the time, Sergei slept in my bed.”

Liam nodded, a fond smile crossing his face. “I used to watch you two on the camera I put there...it used to make me so calm to just...see you sleeping, even if that...bastard was touching you.”

Isaac wasn't sure when his limit for the creepy things that Liam said would be reached, but he managed to swallow back a taste of bile at those words and nod.

“So, he can stay with us.”

“We'll have to work on that, breaking him of the habit, but for tonight...yes, you can stay with us, Sergei.”

Sergei showed no signs of overt joy at the decision, but merely nodded and rested his head against Isaac's shoulder. Isaac swore that no matter how inappropriate or culturally faux pas it was, when they escaped, he would allow Sergei to stay by his side as long as he wanted.

“Come on, then, buddy.” Isaac said, picking Sergei up, and carrying him to Liam's room. “You can take a bath before you go to bed.”

“Good idea. I have to call a friend.” Liam said, before pausing, and turning to Isaac with a dark look in his eyes. “If you try anything, Isaac, *anything*...” He let his threat drop, but ran a finger along his waist, where Isaac knew his gun was.

“I'll be good, I promise.” I whispered, terrified.

“Please don't hurt my papa. I promise to behave.” Sergei pleaded, wrapping his arms around Isaac's neck.

Liam smiled as though he had been waiting for that exact response, before nodding, and letting Isaac take Sergei to the room.

Isaac tried to hold back his tears as he filled the bathtub for Sergei. It was a failed endeavor, but the sound of the flowing water managed to keep his sobs hidden from Liam, if not from Sergei, who was still plastered to Isaac's side.

"I'm sorry, papa." Sergei whispered, enraging Isaac.

It was cruel that Sergei felt that he had to apologize, and from the moment that Liam sent him the first letter, he had never wanted bloody revenge as much as he did in that moment. Three words from Sergei, and Isaac realized that if they survived, he would have to do something, *anything* to return Sergei's sense of security. He refused to sit there and let Sergei blame himself, though.

"No, Sergei. Don't you...don't apologize." Isaac said, thickly.

"But...he was going to hurt you because of me, papa. He wanted to shoot you because I was bad."

"No! He was going to hurt me because *he* is a very, very bad man." Isaac whispered, praying that Liam wasn't behind the door, waiting to yell at them...or worse. Because Isaac was quickly learning that Liam could perform much worse actions that merely threaten Isaac, he seemed capable of any number of barbaric acts.

"But, he said-."

"I don't care what he said. Sergei, I'm not being nice to him because he's a good man or because I like him. He...he could hurt you, and so we have to play a game of pretend so that he doesn't do anything to separate us."

"Pretend..." Sergei said. "Pretend that we like him?"

"Yes." Isaac said. "And I'm so sorry that we have to go through this, but it's the only way that I can make sure that you're safe."

"So...he's not my new papa?" Sergei asked, actually eliciting a chuckle from Isaac.

"No, Sergei. In fact...I'm starting to realize that it was a mistake to send Jordan away like I did. He'd be a good papa for you."

And Isaac meant every word. He should have found another way to make Jordan understand that what he had done was wrong. He regretted with his entire being sending the man away, because it had put Sergei into harm's way.

"He hurt you, too." Sergei pouted, crossing his arms. "I don't like people hurting you."

Sergei was fierce in his determination to protect Isaac, and for the first time in his life, that truly worried him.

"Sergei, Jordan was trying to keep us safe. He was wrong in the way that he went about it, but he was just trying to make sure that this didn't happen. He protected us, Sergei, and in trying to do that he made a mistake by keeping a secret."

"Like you did when you were sick?"

"Yes!" Isaac said, nodding. "And even though you were mad, you forgave me, right?"

"But you're my papa, I have to forgive you. I love you."

"I love you, too, but I also love Stiles, Derek, and Jordan." Isaac look out into the room to make Liam wasn't present. "And if I know Jordan, he'll come and rescue us...I hope."

"What if he doesn't?"

Isaac didn't want to think about that. They had hardly been there for two days and Liam had already threatened to kill them twice. If his faith in Jordan was misplaced, he didn't knew how long he could pull them through.

When Liam joined them a few minutes later, Isaac had an overwhelming urge to cover his son's nudity from the man, and when he did so, he expected a reprimand of some kind, but got nothing from the man who look perturbed by what had happened while they were apart.

In an attempt to make himself seem more amiable, he wrapped Sergei in a towel and turned to him.

“Are you alright?”

Liam frowned and shook his head. “I bought you both clothes. Sergei, they’re in your room, why don’t you go and get some?”

Sergei stayed where he was, looking at Isaac, who nodded, hoping that Sergei remembered their conversation.

“Go on.” He whispered, ruffling his son’s damp hair.

Sergei looked frightened, but nodded, and headed out of the bathroom. Once he was gone, Liam grabbed Isaac and roughly mashed their lips together. Isaac had a hard enough time trying not to throw up to even think about cooperating.

“You’re mine, now.” Liam whispered. “That fucker is trying to find you, but...” Liam pulled out his gun, trailing down Isaac’s body sending a flash of panic throughout Isaac’s nervous system. His heart pounded in his ears while the cold metal drew goosebumps, even through his shirt.

“Liam...what...what are you talking about?” Isaac asked, his voice shaking.

“I just got a call from Matt,” the name sparked Isaac’s memory, but he couldn’t think about it, not while there was a panic attack blossoming in his chest, “he said that Jordan thinks he close to finding you, but even if he does...I’ll keep you...one way or another.”

Isaac could feel the cold breath of death on his neck as Liam raised the gun to his throat.

“I’ll keep you, even...even if I can’t have your body.” Liam said.

Isaac let out a shuddering breath, paralyzed with terror, he feared what would happen when Sergei came back, expecting a night of cuddling, and instead seeing Isaac’s brains splatter on the wall.

“Liam...please...put it down.” Isaac begged. “Sergei-.”

“Him, too. I’ll...I’ll do whatever it takes to be with you. If...if we have to be together in death...”

“No!” Isaac shouted, the threat to his son beating back one type of fear, and presenting another. “Liam, we can figure this out, you don’t...you don’t resort to violence when you’re a father, you have to look at options.”

“He’s fucking persistent! He’s an insane, little freak trying to take you and Sergei away!” Liam said, glaring, not realizing that to Isaac, he had just described himself.

“But...I can talk to him, and tell him that he’s interfering with us. I’ll make him see reason, Liam.”

“Papa?” Sergei asked, stepping into the room, and looking at the scene with his eyes wide in fear.

Liam turned to him and gave him a sad smile, though he kept the muzzle of the gun pointed at Isaac’s throat.

“Papa, what is he doing?”

“Son, go to your room, now!” Isaac shouted.

“No, son. If you move, I’ll kill your father.” Liam said, sounding nervous.

“No, papa!” Sergei shouted, turning around and running in Isaac’s legs. Isaac shoved his son behind himself to protect him.

“Liam, put down the gun. I’ll talk to Jordan and get him to back off...you don’t have to do this.” Isaac whispered.

“He’s coming, and he’ll try to take you both away.” Liam said.

“Liam, you can’t kill me in front of him, that’s...please.” Isaac begged, though he paused when he heard them: Sirens.

Liam hadn’t been wrong, Jordan was coming for them. Isaac knew that it was his boyfriend coming to save him.

“Then...he won’t.” Liam said, moving the gun towards Sergei.

Isaac’s protective instincts flared up and he grabbed the gun, desperate to do

anything that would stop Liam from harming his son. Liam pulled back, trying to take the weapon from Isaac, but one look at his son's tear-streaked face, and he found the strength to maintain his grip on the handle.

"Isaac, we'll be together, stop panicking!"

"You were going to shoot my son, you bastard." Isaac snarled. "Of course I'm going to panic." He heard the sirens draw closer and knew that if he could just keep his hold on the gun for a few more minutes, Jordan would end the threat to him and Sergei. He had once told Jordan to only arrest Liam, but that was before the man had raised a gun to his son. Isaac's moral compass remained steadfast, even as he realized that he wanted...needed Liam to die.

"I'm not losing you, Isaac. You're mine." Liam growled as a bang rang out, causing Sergei to scream.

Isaac felt as though he had been punched in the gut, the recoil from the gun being harder than he could've imagined, though he kept hanging on. He could only hope the other bullets missed.

To separate himself and Liam from Sergei, Isaac pushed Liam back, not succeeding in making him fall, but forcing him to take a few steps back until his calves hit the bed, causing them to both tumble onto it.

Liam kept his firm grip on the gun, his face contorted in rage as he tried to pry it from Isaac's grasp. A second shot echoed in Isaac's ear and again the recoil winded him.

"Papa..." Sergei's voice triggered Isaac's base instincts, making him want to turn his head, though he knew that he'd lose his focus if he did, and that it would be disastrous, instead he yelled at his son:

"Sergei, get the fuck out of here, and go outside!" He barked, praying that he'd be able to apologize later.

"No!" Liam roared as he watched Sergei leave the room. "We're a family! We have to go together!"

Isaac had no experience in fighting. He had never been a brawler, but the concrete threat to Sergei brought his hand to a fist, which he threw as hard as he

could into Liam's face.

He barely felt the pain from the blow, even though he saw his hand split open when he pulled it back, and had hit Liam hard enough to break his nose. The howl of agony from the psychopath confirmed that he had landed a good hit.

Isaac was rather proud of himself until he realized that the punch had a consequence: Without both of his hands on the weapon, Liam was able to yank it away, and use it to strike a blow to Isaac's temple, dazing him.

"Sergei, run!" Isaac screamed, not able to look and see if his son was still in the room or not.

Liam stuck Isaac again, knocking him to the ground, before moving towards to the door. Isaac lashed out with a kick, aiming for Liam's calf, which only caused him to turn on Isaac.

Liam was panting, his face red from anger and exertion as he aimed the gun at Isaac's head.

"You ruined everything!" He cried, spit flying from his mouth. "You fucking destroyed everything! I'll send your son after you."

Isaac had time to see the maliciously deranged look in the man's eyes, before his finger tightened on the trigger.

Bang!

Notes for the Chapter:

I am the master of cliffhangers! All must admit it and bow down before I post another chapter! Just kidding, but I might be a few days late with my next chapter due to school. Please let me know what you think? Especially since I would like to turn this into a novel after I'm done with it, some constructive criticism now would be great!

60. Moy Papa. (My Papa)

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan's perspective

Jordan

Five Minutes Earlier

Jordan sped towards the address that he had been given by Liam's grandmother, three other officers close behind him, sirens wailing. Their lights cast dim patterns on the houses that they passed, the evening allowing them to glow in the lack of light.

"Please, God, let me reach them in time." Jordan prayed, desperately hoping that any deity heard him and kept Isaac and Sergei safe for only a few more moments.

He skidded into the driveway of the house, shocked for a second by how normal it and the neighbor's were. The greatest tragedy of his life had happened by a man living in a neighborhood with clipped lawns, playing children, and soccer moms. It was a place of content living and joy, not any home for a monster.

Jordan got out of his car and made for the door, not stopping for anything, even John's shouts. He pulled out his gun as he ran, wondering if he might have to use it or if he could surprise Liam. He knew that Isaac was inside, almost as though his soul had been missing for days, and he could sense its presence in the house.

Right as Jordan was about to kick down the door, he was halted when it opened, and Sergei ran out, his eyes wide in horror as he took in the scene on the lawn. They stood, frozen for a second, before Sergei ran towards Jordan, throwing himself into his arms. Jordan caught him, a little awkwardly because of the gun, and held him close for a moment, allowing the knowledge that at least one of his charges was safe to wash over him and unclench a few of the knots in his stomach. When he put Sergei down, he couldn't help the fatherly instinct to check him for injuries. He was crying, tears left tracks down his face, but he

seemed completely unharmed. Jordan promised himself that he would perform a more thorough analysis when he had rescued Isaac, but pointed behind him.

“Sergei, go to John.” He said, quickly.

“My...my...my papa!” Sergei sobbed, ignoring Jordan, and grabbing his hand to pull him back inside.

“Sergei!” Jordan said, keeping a grip on Sergei’s arm to keep him from returning to such a dark place. “I’m going to go and get your papa, but I need you to stay here, please?”

Jordan didn’t receive an answer from Sergei, but Tara came forward and picked him up.

Sergei wailed and fought against her, but was too tiny to escape.

“Отпусти меня, сука! Мой папа!” Sergei screeched into the night, though Jordan turned his attention away, towards the door. As much as he wanted to console Sergei, he needed to get to the man who was still in danger.

He moved quickly, pointing his gun into the bare kitchen, looking for any sign of Isaac.

“I’ll send your son after you.” A harsh, broken voice said from the room to his right, and Jordan turned in time to see Liam, his eyes narrowed in hate as he pointed a gun at a terrified looking Isaac.

Jordan reacted without thinking. There was no logic or time to consider consequences, or the law. He saw Isaac in danger and he pulled his trigger, causing the sound of discharge to echo through the hall. Again and again, Jordan fired his weapon until there was nothing left to aim at. The wall farthest from Jordan was splashed with red, bits of brain and skull dripped from where they had landed, and the smell of gunpowder was still heavy in the air, but Jordan ignored all of it to run to Isaac’s side.

Blood. Isaac was covered in blood, cerebral tissue, and sweat, but Jordan saw his eyes darting to him, and nearly passed out from the relief that it brought him.

“Jor...Jordan?” Isaac croaked, his voice hoarse and raw.

“Sergei’s safe.” Was Jordan’s response. It was the thing he knew that even with a gun pointed at his head, Isaac had been thinking about.

Jordan almost laughed at the momentarily puzzled look on Isaac’s face before his lips formed a small smile. Isaac hadn’t been gone too long, but he was paler than Jordan remembered, though Jordan assumed that it was probably due to whatever Liam had done.

“Is he...?” Isaac let his sentence drop, but he didn’t turn his eyes to the body that was before him, instead he kept them trained on Jordan as he sat up, wincing.

Jordan’s eyes flitted to Liam and he nodded when he saw most of the man’s head was missing.

“You’re safe.”

Isaac laughed as though the concept of being safe was foreign to him, and Jordan realized that, even with them sleeping in the same bed, Liam’s death made Isaac actually *safe* for the first time in a long time. He had been without financial security in Chicago, and had been stalked in Beacon Hills for months.

Jordan had promised himself that unless Isaac said it was okay, he wasn’t going to touch the man, but he couldn’t help himself. He *threw* himself onto Isaac’s, tears escaping from his eyes as he cried in the realization that the man he loved was alive. Liam’s dead body could rise up and drag him down to hell, and he would go willingly, because Isaac was alive and safe. There were more tears when Isaac’s cool arms reached up and embraced him back.

“I love you.” Isaac whispered, his voice still sounding dry, though it cracked with tears as well.

“I love you, too, babe.” Jordan said, pulling Isaac tighter against him. “I-.”

Jordan paused when Isaac gasped, though he didn’t notice the warm fluid leaking onto his shirt until he pulled back, and looked down to see Liam’s blood on his uniform, having transferred from Isaac’s black shirt.

Isaac stared at it, before reaching down with his hand to touch his stomach, he winced, and let out a ragged yelp.

Jordan felt the air in his lungs stagnate and his blood freeze as he watched Isaac lift his shirt up to reveal two bullet holes in his stomach, nestled in the hair like rosebuds laying the grass. They were both oozing blood and though Jordan wasn't an expert, it looked like a lot. Isaac's chest was already covered in blood. Blood that should have been on the inside, Jordan realized dumbly.

"Vydrachka...I'm hurt." He said, sounding amazed, before falling forward into Jordan's arms

"No! Isaac!" Jordan shouted, holding Isaac, before a deeper instinct kicked in, and he turned towards the door to see John approaching.

"Call an ambulance, now!" Jordan roared and he turned Isaac over, and placing him carefully on the ground.

Improvising, Jordan tore his own shirt off, before finding the seam, and tearing it in two. Bundling up the cloth, Jordan pressed them to Isaac's wounds, trying to stem the flow of blood with pressure.

His mind was frantic and jumbled as he tried to concentrate on the weak pulse that he could feel beneath his fingers. If he thought that it would have helped, he would have ripped open his own veins to give Isaac his blood, but as it was, all he could was apply pressure and whisper to the man that he loved.

"You're going to be alright, babe. I...they're calling an ambulance, and...you're going to be alright."

Isaac was unconscious or too weary to respond, but that didn't deter Jordan.

"Sergei's fine, he tried to come in to get you, but I kept him safe. I promised you that I would always keep him safe, and even though I failed, I did."

"Not your...my fault." Isaac's ragged voice croaked out.

"No, babe." Jordan said with a sobbing laugh. "It's not your fault."

Isaac didn't speak again and after hearing his voice for a scant second, it made Jordan panic more. He tried to hold it down, to be an officer, to be a marine, to be the fucking man who could stay strong for Isaac and not fucking bawl while he bleed out, but he *couldn't*.

“No, Isaac, you...you have to come back to me. We...we...we have so much to do.” He sobbed. “Sergei’s in school...soon, and you...I have to marry you... Babe, I want to be your husband...and learn Russian...and grow old in your arms.”

Isaac’s silence only caused Jordan to weep as he tried to comprehend what the world would be like without the man who brought light to it.

“You...you’re beautiful.” Jordan continued. “I mean...more than just your looks, you’re...you’re...you’re strong. I mean, look...look at Sergei, he’s...he’s fucking brilliant. I want to be a father to him, but...but not like this.”

The only solace that Jordan received was the pulse that still beat under his shaking hands. It was weak, but it wasn’t gone, which allowed Jordan to maintain a semblance of his sanity.

The wails of the ambulance’s sirens were noticeable to Jordan, and he turned back to Isaac.

“Babe, help is on the way. If you hang on for just a few more moments, they’ll help you...please.”

Isaac responded in the form a cough that stained his lips red, and made Jordan shake with renewed sobs. He didn’t a doctorate to tell him that coughing up blood was a bad sign, but he was reassured by John’s voice.

“He’s through here.” He said, leading two men in paramedic uniforms into the room. One was holding a bag and the other had a simple, wooden stretcher.

“Jordan...” John said, trying to pull Jordan up, but Jordan pulled back, not wanting to leave Isaac’s side.

“Sir, I understand that you want to stay, but if we’re to help him, you need to give us some space.” The first paramedic said, the words making Jordan scramble away into John’s arms.

“It’s alright, son, they’ll help.” John whispered to him, providing strength for Jordan who simply didn’t have anymore. He broke down as he watched the two men look Isaac over, their faces grim. From a distance Jordan could see how much of Isaac’s had spilt out, staining the carpet, he could see how *pale* Isaac

was, and it petrified him.

They both lifted Isaac onto the stretcher and picked him up, Jordan wasn't far behind. They rushed him to the front lawn where their vehicle's lights bathed the lawn in red and blue.

"John, I have to go."

"I know." John said, nodding, his face gaunt as he watched the paramedics load Isaac onto a wheeled carrier, and push him into the ambulance.

"You're not going without me." He said, climbing in after them.

"We have to hurry!" The first paramedic said, banging on the window. They completely ignored Jordan's presence, but allowed him to stay.

One of the paramedics pulled out a stethoscope from his bag and pressed the diaphragm to Isaac's chest, moving it around while frowning. The second was keeping his hands steady, apply pressure while the ambulance careened through the night.

"Left lung has fluid." He said, taking Isaac's wrist. "Blood pressure and pulse are both low."

"Neither bullet left the body." The second said, and Jordan wished he knew whether that was good or bad. Before he could ask, Isaac let out another cough and brought up more blood.

"Can you...do anything?" He asked.

"He needs surgery, sir, all we can do is try and stop the blood flow until we get to the hospital." He explained, shaking his head. The second man seemed to take pity on Jordan, though.

"I've seen worse." He said, no doubt lying, but Jordan grasped at the words like a drowning man at oxygen. "There was...a man a few years back that failed to tighten the bolts on his circular saw, and the blade flew up into his chest. He pulled out himself, remember, Jim?"

Jim grunted, but kept his eyes on his watch while he continued to hold Isaac's

wrist, making sure, no doubt, that his heart was still beating.

“His heart almost stopped three times, but we saved him.”

Jordan needed to believe it, he had to have faith that Isaac would somehow survive. Isaac was his everything, and Jordan didn't want to know life without him.

Notes for the Chapter:

I was going to post this earlier today, but me, my fiancé, and my roommate got into a cleaning craze. My Pokemon figures are front and center now, though, so it was worth it.

The Russian isn't translated because Jordan can't understand it, so I thought the Cyrillic was a nice touch to show that. (On a side note, I'm taking Russian this semester and was able to type that whole sentence with a translator!)

I'm avoiding spoilers, so this is all for now.

61. Offensive

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan's perspective.

Jordan

The sun shone on the day that they chose to bury Isaac. An extremely offensive gesture in Jordan's opinion. The birds dared to chirp, the bees dared to buzz, and the warmth that surrounded him was almost painful when he was so dead and cold inside.

Jordan could barely grasp the very concept of *breathing*, and yet for billions around the world, life was going on like normal. The soft roar of a far off airplane reached Jordan's ears, and for a moment, Jordan thought about the happy children heading off to a last summer adventure, or the men and women, flying to see the people that they loved.

Jordan despised them.

No one deserved to be happy when the sole source of everything Jordan knew to be good and pure was laying cold and motionless in a coffin.

No one wanted to speak, none of Isaac's friends had the energy to do so, and Jordan certainly couldn't force words to come from him if he tried. The only noises were sniffles and wails coming from the group.

Sergei was completely silent, though it wasn't from stoicism. He had screamed, kicked, begged, and howled the entire way there, and now, as Jordan's eyes fell to him, Sergei seemed to be dead, too. He stared at Isaac's mahogany coffin, the flowers, and the pit ready to swallow his father. His eyes were red and puffy as silent tears left their tracks on his face. The kid had much deeper marks on him than that, though.

As sickeningly grieved he felt, he knew that his emotions could never hold a candle to what Sergei was feeling. A father and son relationship like the one that Isaac and Sergei had just wasn't something that could be replace or repaired. Sergei had been left with a gaping, jagged wound in his heart, and as Jordan

stared at him, he knew that it would never be healed. The carefree and happy Sergei that he knew was gone. Just like his own joy, everything that made up Sergei would be locked away in Isaac's tomb for eternity.

Jordan was surprised that he even got to see any of the arrangements that Stiles had brokenly made for Isaac's funeral. The day he had been with Isaac on the way to the hospital, he had been unable to even fathom Isaac's death, sure that he would drop dead himself if it ever came to pass.

Of course, Jordan had thought about it. Spend lonely hours in his apartment, holding his gun in his hand while he tried to bring himself to pull the trigger. The only thing that had stayed his hand had been Sergei. He had made a promise to Isaac that he would look after his son, and no amount of grief could break such a promise.

Sergei was *his* responsibility now, a responsibility that meant he couldn't leave his worldly pain behind. But, Jordan didn't know *how* to take care of Sergei when he hardly even felt like taking care of himself. There was...nothing to live on for, nothing to-.

"Jordan!" A sharp blow to his shoulder made Jordan awake with a start.

Jordan's eyes flew open, though the harsh light streaming through the hospital's windows made him regret the action, immediately.

"Frak." He hissed, his eyes watering while he tried to rub them.

"You were having a bad dream." Sergei's voice said, which explained the heavy weight in Jordan's lap. He didn't remember Sergei crawling up into his lap, though he did remember the boy clinging to him while they waited for news on Isaac's condition.

Jordan forced his eyes back open, ignoring the stinging sensation to look at his boyfriend, who still seemed to be slumbering peacefully. Isaac had been asleep since Jordan had been holding him back at Liam's house, and it was with a pang that he remembered that despite being better off than in his nightmare, Isaac was still in the red in regards to his prognosis.

While he had not seen the deadly side of a bullet the same way that Liam had, Isaac had slipped dangerously close to ending up the way Jordan's nightmares

like to portray.

Both of the bullets that had torn their way through Isaac had damaged internal organs. One had collapsed his lung and flooded it with blood and the other had perforated his small intestine. It had worried Melissa, which had terrified Jordan. Though the bullets had been removed and the wounds stitched, Isaac was still in danger of internal hemorrhaging and complication from leaking fluids. As it was, he had taken four transfusions just to keep stable, and living.

Isaac was wrapped up in numerous tubes and wires. They kept his body stable. With his wounds, Isaac needed assistance breathing, and could only intake liquid nutrition. His body simply couldn't handle solids.

Isaac had also not woken up since his arrival in the hospital, something Melissa said was not unusual, but that did little to reassure Jordan, especially after his nap.

"Any change?" He asked, his voice croaking.

Stiles, who had refused to leave, just like Jordan, rested his head against Derek's shoulder, and shook his head.

"I don't know whether to be relieved that he's not getting worse or disappointed that he's not getting better."

Jordan knew exactly how he felt, though when he heard the Isaac was not getting any better, his stomach knotted painfully.

Jordan looked down at Sergei to make sure that the boy was alright. When exactly Sergei had chosen Jordan's lap as the place to curl up, the deputy did not know, but he accepted the child's presence as a sign that Sergei was no longer angry with him.

"How are you holding up?"

Sergei looked to Isaac and frowned. "I want my papa to wake up."

"I know, kiddo, but..." Jordan sighed. Even though secrets had caused so much turmoil, he still was unsure of himself as a provider of information for Sergei.

“I know he’s sick.” Sergei said, finishing Isaac’s thought on his own in a display of his brilliance. “But...I miss him.”

“I miss him, too.” Jordan admitted, because having Isaac asleep in a hospital bed next to him, while better than having him bleed out, it was still hollow when compared to the idea of what he had before.

For the first time since he had woken up, Jordan noticed that John was missing.

“Where’s your dad?” He asked Stiles, who smiled, sadly.

“At the station. Just because Isaac is here, it doesn’t mean that the world stops.”

It did for Jordan. Even though John had given him his position on the force back, Jordan had declined it, pending Isaac’s condition. Jordan had left Isaac once and the price had been too high. He wouldn’t leave Isaac’s side until he was certain that the man would be alright...or Isaac asked, though Jordan was sure that Isaac wouldn’t. Sergei seemed to be forgiving and had told Jordan that Isaac had been of a similar mindset.

Jordan could only hope that Isaac would be happy to see him when he woke up, though buried under the layers of his current fears was one of Isaac’s rejection.

“I also called the rest of the group, but the doctor’s being a lot less lenient than when Sergei was here. They’re limiting us to three plus Sergei, and he said that I was lucky for that.” Stiles said, huffing.

“Luck has nothing to do with it.” Jordan said. “I’m not leaving.”

“Yeah, we have to stay and protect papa.” Sergei added, crossing his arms.

“That’s not something we have to worry about anymore, Seryozha.” Derek said, a look of pride in his eyes. “Jordan took care of the man who was going to hurt your papa.”

“Something we’re all grateful for.” Stiles added, but Jordan shook his head.

The mere fact that Isaac was in the hospital was a testament to the fact that he had failed. Isaac had almost died, and it wasn’t inconceivable that he still could. He didn’t want praise from Derek, Stiles, or anyone else while Isaac was still in

critical condition.

“I was too late.” He growled out. “I...frakked up and Isaac paid the price.”

“That bad man was going to kill my papa, he said so. You saved us, Jordan. I wouldn’t talk to you if you hadn’t.” Sergei said, effectively putting a stop to Jordan’s pity party. Sergei was forgiving him, and beyond that...being grateful for at least bringing Isaac through alive.

“So....you’re not mad that your papa is hurt?”

“I’m sad that he’s hurt, but I know that you did your best.” Sergei said, simply.

“You’re an amazing kid, you know that?”

“And you’re an amazing papa, Jordan.” Sergei whispered, the words drawing forth a choked sob from Jordan.

There had been no fanfare or buildup, and yet, the entire polarity of the world had shifted in that moment. With six words, Jordan was a father. Considering that Jordan already loved Sergei and had vowed to protect him, it didn’t change anything, and yet, it changed everything. Jordan had a son, the best in the world as far as he was concerned.

It was odd for him to feel so despondent about Isaac’s condition, and yet feel tears of joy begin to slide down his face as he came to terms with the gravity of Sergei’s words.

“I...you want me to be your papa?” He asked.

Sergei nodded, seemingly not grasping what it meant to Jordan to truly be considered a member of their family. “I think so, but you have to promise to never make my papa cry again.”

“I swear on everything that I am Sergei, your papa won’t know unhappiness with me.”

Sergei surveyed him for a moment, before smiling. “Then you can be my papa, too.”

Jordan opened his mouth in an attempt to begin to explain how it made him feel, but a knock at the door interrupted him.

“I’m sorry, may I come in?” It was Melissa, though her usually cheerful demeanor was sullen. Jordan didn’t have to ask why. When they had first arrived, and once Jordan had composed himself enough to handle talking to people, Melissa had come to him, broken and sobbing, pleading for forgiveness over Liam. She considered it her fault that she had trusted him enough to let him into the room back when they all thought he was an innocent stutterer named Kevin. Jordan had done the best he could, under the circumstances, to ensure her that he held no grudge against anyone but the dead man.

“Sure, come on in, Melissa.” Jordan said, smiling at her, only able to do so because of what Sergei had said.

Melissa didn’t stop to chat or exchange any pleasantries, though there was a relief in her voice as she explained:

“We ran his blood work and there was no signs that his injuries are causing complications, which is an extremely reassuring sign.”

“When will my papa wake up?” Sergei asked.

“Soon, we’re hoping. There’s no sign of neurological damage, but he did go into shock, which can cause prolonged unconsciousness.”

Sergei cocked his head, his face furrowed in concentration. “So...when will my papa wake up?” He repeated.

The smallest smile crossed her face. “Soon, he just needs to rest for a little while longer.”

And Jordan would be there when he did. He swore that just as when Sergei had been there, he wouldn’t leave Isaac’s side ever again. Sergei seemed to think that Isaac was ready for them to be together, again, and if it was true, then Jordan wouldn’t be leaving him again for a while.

“When he wakes up, will we be able to go home? I don’t like hospitals.”

“Well...no, Sergei, not right away. Your papa is still really hurt and needs to stay

so that we can make sure he gets better quickly.”

Sergei’s face dropped, but Derek chimed in. “I was going to stay, but if you want to go back home, Sergei, I can take you.”

Sergei shook his head. “I want to stay with my papas.”

It was the second time he had made the reference and it only hardened Jordan’s resolve to be the best father that he could. He pulled Sergei closer to his chest.

“You can stay, if you want. No one’s going to make you go, but Derek was just being nice.” He whispered.

“Sorry, dyadya, but can I stay?” He turned his decision into a question, though Jordan was sure he was only doing it to be polite.

“Of course you can stay, I was just giving you an option.” Derek said with a soft smile.

“We’ll do everything we can so that you and your...papas can go home soon.” Melissa added, her eyes sweeping over everyone in the room. Behind the promise was a silent apology.

Notes for the Chapter:

So, normally, I put my dream sequences in italics, but I think it ruins the illusion, and how could I do this unbelievably, CRUEL chapter without illusion?

62. Circles

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan receives a surprise in the hospital.

Jordan

Jordan sat with his hand on Isaac's arm, absentmindedly rubbing small circles into the hair there. His eyes were glazed over, having lost focus while he thought about the altercation with Liam. He combed over the encounter in his head. Every move, every lead was analyzed and dissected while he tried to think if there was anything more he could have done.

Derek, Stiles, and Sergei were all sleeping, though the latter was still curled up in Jordan's lap, needing the connection to someone he trusted until Isaac woke up. Jordan didn't know if Sergei would ever trust anyone every again, though he took it as an encouraging sign that Isaac's son...*his* son was still speaking in English.

John was sitting in a chair next to Isaac's bed as well. His presence was something that had enraged the doctor overseeing the ward. He had tried to tell John the same thing that he had told Stiles: Three to a room and one child, but John had simply shoved the doctor out of the way, and sat down, barking at Stiles and Derek to stay when the doctor glared.

He didn't have to tell Jordan to break the rules and stay. There was no one for the doctor to call, except him, and he didn't exactly feel like arresting himself. Being a deputy certainly had its perks.

Still, they felt that it would be pushing their luck and might actually pose a danger to Isaac if they brought the entire group into the room, but as far as Jordan was aware, they were sleeping in the waiting room. Just like when Sergei had been sick, the gesture touched and warmed a part of Jordan deep in his chest. That Isaac's friends were so diligent could only be seen as a blessing.

Jordan knew that their blessings hadn't ended there. The mere fact that Stiles and Derek were there had been due to no small effort on their part. Matt had been yet another obstacle in their search for Isaac, and while Jordan had not had to deal

with him personally, he had tried to hinder Derek and Stiles. Jordan hadn't cared to hear the whole story, not with Isaac dying, but he knew that Matt was in a jail cell, and that it had been Stiles who had apprehended him.

Jordan had a lot to process, but his brain didn't feel up to the task, not without a good night's sleep, but he refused to get more than a few hours until Isaac was awake. He couldn't shake the fear the something terrible would happen while he was unconscious. He still had nightmares about losing Isaac and Sergei and knew that he wouldn't be able to truly rest until he was holding a well Isaac in his arms.

It was while the room was quiet and still that Jordan felt the first movement. Isaac's arm gave the smallest twitch, before there was a low moan from the man. Jordan jumped, surprised as he was by it, making Sergei start awake. His shout triggered not only John's alertness, but made Isaac's eyes fly open.

For a moment, Jordan was allowed to feel a sense of relief that was unrivaled by anything previous. His boyfriend, the man that he knew he would love for the rest of his life was awake, which could only signal something good, but all of it was dashed when Isaac began struggling, his grunts coming out panicked, his eyes rolling around the room, trying to find answers. This was reflected in the monitor, which had been steady in making its marks of Isaac's heart rate. It began to beep faster, frightening Jordan, telling him that something was wrong, even though he had no clue as to how to fix it.

It was John who managed to keep his cool and remedy the situation.

"Easy, moy plemnyannik." He said, pressing a hand to Isaac's chest, and easing him back. "You have a breathing tube, you need to be calm or you can hurt yourself."

Sergei seemed to heed John's words as well, for he stopped trying to get to Isaac, though the desire to do so was very clear in his eyes.

"Sergei's here." Jordan said, knowing that the first information Isaac would want would be about his son.

When Isaac's eyes locked onto Sergei, the tears began immediately, streaming down his face while sobs heaved their way through the tube still in his throat.

“Don’t cry, papa. Jordan saved us.” Sergei whispered, his voice causing Isaac to weakly hold his arms out.

Jordan was loathe to cause Isaac harm, and the doctor had given explicit warnings when it came to the type of activity that he was allowed to do, but at the same time, he couldn’t very well deny Isaac access to his son. It would be cruel, and Jordan didn’t have the heart to deny it, though John gave a warning.

“Be very careful, Isaac. You’re not fully healed, yet.”

Isaac’s eyes were full of a longing that Jordan could fully identify with. He had been right there, next to Isaac’s bed for three days, but had missed Isaac with all of his heart. Even full of fear, Isaac’s eyes were beautiful to him, just seeing them again was enough to ground Jordan.

Jordan brought Sergei to Isaac’s bed and carefully set him down, not needing to extoll any warnings to Sergei, who very carefully laid down next to his father with controlled, measured movements, until he was flush with Isaac’s body, facing him so Isaac could wrap a single arm around him.

Jordan moved to step back once he was sure that Sergei was not causing any harm, but Isaac’s free hand stayed extended, reaching for him. Confused, Jordan took his hand, and watched with a soft smile as Isaac brought it to his lips. Tears were still leaking from his eyes as a ragged growl forced its way around the breathing tube

“I...” Jordan’s voice cracked on the very first word, and he knew he wouldn’t make it through what he wanted to say without weeping. “I tried.” Sure enough, tears began to trail their way across his cheeks. “I tried so hard to find you before anything happened.”

Isaac grunted and let go of Jordan to reach up to the tube, seemingly to pull it out.

“Babe, no!” Jordan shouted, his words causing Isaac to flinch, and lower his hand. “I’m...I’m sorry.” He said, his tone returning a more acceptable one.

“You’re not a doctor, man, you can’t just go removing tubes without supervision.” Stiles added.

Isaac couldn't speak, but he took Jordan's hand back, and held it close to his chest.

"I missed you, too. God, I missed you, babe." Jordan sobbed, running a hand down the side of Isaac's face, as though he might lose him, again. "I...I couldn't sleep, I could hardly breathe without you."

Isaac kissed his hand and squeezed it tight as though promising to never let him go, something that Jordan had no problem with.

Isaac

He was alive.

Isaac didn't need any reason for why he was other than the man whose hand he was holding. He knew, without a doubt that it had been Jordan who had saved him and Sergei.

Sergei, who was curled up next to his chest, alive, and seemingly unhurt. If Sergei didn't need his own hospital bed that could only mean that he hadn't been hurt, which meant that the pain Isaac was feeling was more than a fair compensation.

Isaac didn't know what his wounds were exactly, but he was alive to hold his son and the hand of the man that he loved, and that was all he had asked.

Looking around the room, he saw Stiles, Derek, and John, all of them perfectly healthy, though looking a little tired.

Isaac had so much to say. He wanted to know what happened, how long he had been asleep, if Sergei was truly alright, if everyone on the force was, he wanted to let Sergei know how *sorry* he was for what had happened, and tell Jordan that he was never letting the man out of his site again, but the tube in his throat didn't allow him to do anything but cry.

He cried for Sergei, for the horrors his son had gone through, and the long road to recovery they had to go through. He cried for Jordan and the terror he had forced him to suffer by being stubborn and kicking him out. He cried for Stiles

and Derek, whose home had been broken into, and who probably felt uncomfortable with Isaac moving back in after all that had happened. He cried for John and the other officers who had been forced to put themselves in danger. He cried for himself, the pain he was in, and the relief he felt that it was all over.

The only person that he didn't cry for was Liam. Even though Isaac remembered with crystal clarity the sound of his brain hitting the wall and the harsh scent of blood, and even though he understood the reality of what had happened, and the fundamental flaw in Liam's biology that had caused him to behave the way he did, he still didn't care. Insane or not, the man had threatened his son, and Isaac refused to feel bad about him.

"Papa, please don't cry." Sergei's voice was soft, sweet, and perfect. It was what Isaac had been willing to die for, and he used the hand that was around Sergei to pull him tighter as he tried to smile to tell his son that he was alright, but knew, from the look on his face, that he had failed.

Isaac wanted the tube out, but didn't know how to communicate that desire other than by reaching up to take it out himself, again.

"Babe, please." Jordan begged, reaching out to take his hand. "You could hurt yourself."

Stiles seemed to get what he wanted, though. "I'll go and get Melissa." He said, and Isaac nodded, grateful to his friend's attentiveness.

Jordan let out a nervous chuckle and ran his hand through Isaac's hair.

"Sorry, I...I didn't even think about that. I thought maybe it had to stay in."

Isaac shook his head. Jordan had nothing to apologize for in his opinion, and even if he did, after what he had done to save Sergei, he wouldn't listen.

"Does it hurt, papa?"

Isaac shook his head. It was uncomfortable, but it didn't hurt, and he didn't want anyone worrying about him anyway, not until he knew the greater effects of Liam's escapade.

"He really can't be in the bed with you." Isaac jumped at the new voice and

turned to see a man in teal scrubs standing in the doorway, Stiles right behind him.

“Melissa wasn’t there, but I found him.” Stiles said, motioning with his chin, sounding unhappy.

Isaac didn’t want the man to touch him or Sergei, and he wrapped his arm tighter around his son, while he tried to get up to get away.

“Babe, what’s wrong?” Jordan asked, looking to the heart monitor, which Isaac noticed was beeping wildly. His breaths were coming in short pants as well. He was on the brink of a panic attack, just from a doctor walking into the room.

However, as though no time had passed since his last panic attack, Jordan was quickly there, gently pushing him back down, while pressing a kiss to his cheek.

“Stay here with me. You’re safe.” He whispered, his voice soothing. “I know he’s rude, but he checks out, he’s actually a doctor.”

Notes for the Chapter:

So...after all the excitement, I feel that this chapter is a little lackluster, but it's necessary! So, let's march along. No promises on the next chapter date, but I promise to work on this when I can.

Thank you!

63. Snark

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac in the hospital

Isaac

Isaac was cautious, even after Jordan's reassurances when it came to the doctor. When he reached out to brace himself against Isaac's shoulder, Isaac flinched and pulled away. Jordan was there in a second, keeping Isaac steady by taking his hand.

"It's alright, babe." He whispered. "You're safe, I will keep you safe."

It was a vow that Isaac had no problems believing, but his body was *terrified*. The atrocities committed under Liam's roof had left scars deeper than he realized, and Isaac wasn't sure why he was surprised. He had been worried about they had affected Sergei, but he had been raped, and it was bound to make him uncomfortable around people.

It didn't help that the doctor –McFarland, according to his name badge- was less than friendly. He was frustrated that Isaac refused to let Sergei be removed from the bed, and in general just seemed to be grumpy man.

"This might hurt a little, but I need you to tell me if you taste blood." The doctor gave as his only warning, before pulling the tube out in one move.

Even in his panic, Isaac could tell that having a tracheal tube removed was not on his list of repeatable experienced. Isaac was reminded of throwing up, though without any of the muscle contractions.

Without the tube, Isaac was able to feel the true consequences of his wounds. His diaphragm taking on the burden of breathing on its own made his chest immediately begin to buzz with a low, throbbing pain.

"Blood?" Doctor McFarland asked.

"What?" Isaac replied, breathlessly.

“Do you taste blood?” The doctor repeated in a slow voice as though Isaac had received some type of traumatic head injury.

“What is your problem?” Jordan snapped. “We haven’t done anything to you, so stop treating my boyfriend like he’s a criminal.”

“Answer the question, Isaac.” The doctor demanded, ignoring Jordan altogether, which seemed to enrage the man, but Isaac, in his need for a stable environment, took his hand and kissed it to calm him down. There was nothing he could do about John, Stiles, and Derek, though, all of them were glaring daggers at the doctor, and Isaac didn’t have the strength to stop an apparent fight from breaking out.

“No.” Isaac whispered. “No blood.”

“Good. If you do taste blood, find a doctor. I’ll send Melissa.” He said, before turning on his heel, leaving Isaac confounded as to his brusque and rude behavior.

However, Isaac had bigger things to worry about than inconsiderate doctors, whom he didn’t even care about. Instead, he painfully pulled Sergei closer to his chest.

“I love you, son.” He whispered as tears stung his eyes. “I love you so much.”

“I love you, too, papa.” Sergei said.

Isaac didn’t move for a moment, he simply held Sergei as the words flowed as freely as his tears.

“I’m so sorry, Sergei. I wanted...I always want to protect you, and I let that awful, bad man get us, and I’m sorry. I’m sorry that I had to lie, and I’m-.”

Sergei reached out his tiny hand and pressed it to Isaac’s mouth.

“You protected me as best as you could, papa, and Jordan saved us when you couldn’t. He hurt you, he was a bad man, but I know that you didn’t want it.”

“I didn’t. If there was one thing that I wanted for your life, it was to never have to go through what we just escaped from.” Isaac said, his sobs causing

nauseating waves of pain to jolt through him, but he ignored it, because he still feared that Sergei might bear a hidden blame in his heart. Or worse still, Sergei could have scars across his soul, the same way that he did.

“As long as my papas are alright, I’ll be happy.”

It was a new pluralization of a familiar word, but Isaac didn’t have to ask what he meant. As long as Jordan was willing to take on the role, there was no one better to look after Sergei in a joint role with him.

“Papa, huh?” He asked turning to Jordan with a wide smile. Jordan’s eyes went wide, and he began stuttering.

“I...I...He asked, and I said yes, but...if...if you don’t want-.”

“Jordan.” Isaac interrupted him, trying to maintain his grin while every breath brought pain. “You saved our lives. You are my prince, you saved us, and there is no one else that I could ask to be a father to him.”

“Well, I...I could’ve done more. I didn’t-.”

“No.” Isaac didn’t want to hear any excuses, not when it came to what Jordan had done for them. “I should be dead, Jordan. He pointed a gun at my son, and right at my head, and he’s the one who got shot, because of *you*. So, please don’t make light of it. You saved my son, Jordan, so please stop trying to deny it.”

“I just feel like I didn’t do enough.”

“Dyadya Stiles, why do my papas keep blaming themselves?” Sergei asked, very pointedly.

“Because sometimes adults like to take the blame for things that they didn’t cause. Jordan wants to protect you and your papa, and since you were taken, he blames himself, and you papa wants to always keep you safe, he blames himself, too.”

Isaac got the message, and while he still felt that if he had never asked Jordan to leave that they would have been safe, he was willing to allow the issue to drop, and merely hold an eternal debt of gratitude to Jordan.

“Even though neither of them did anything wrong.” John added. “Except for that lying business.”

“But I’m over that.” Isaac said, assuming that John was referring to Jordan’s lie, before turning to Jordan. “I’m never going to let something like that separate us, again. I love you, Jordan Parrish, and I want you here for the rest of our lives.”

Jordan’s grin was blinding. “Ya tozhe tebya lyublyu, babe. But not...*here* here, right?” He asked, looking around. “I mean...the hospital doesn’t exactly contribute to relationship bliss.”

Isaac opened his mouth, but a stern, motherly voice interrupted him.

“I happen to find my hospital to be very romantic.” Melissa said. Isaac was glad to realize that he didn’t panic the way he had over the doctor, but of course, Melissa was not a rude man. She came in and gave Isaac a friendly smile, before shaking her head, and clucking her tongue.

“Robbie may be unfriendly, but he’s right, Sergei really shouldn’t be pressed into your chest like that. You had a collapsed lung, Isaac, if we could oxygenate your blood without you breathing, we’d do it.”

“I’m making my papa sick by being here?” Sergei asked, sounding worried, and despite the pain, Isaac pulled him closer.

“No, son. I promise, I’m alright.” He insisted, not emotionally prepared to let Sergei go.

“Isaac, I know what it’s like.” And Isaac shook his head because Melissa had no Earthly way of *knowing*. She was a mother, but Isaac would have remembered if Scott had come to school with stories of a harrowing tale of abduction. “I know, ‘how would I know’, right?” She asked with a smirk. “But you look me in the eyes and tell me that when he was born, you didn’t fear this exact thing happening every day.”

Isaac nodded.

“Parents know, Isaac. Just because your fears actually came true, it doesn’t mean that we didn’t go through that fear at one time or another.”

“She’s right.” John said, nodding. “I never lost Stiles, but especially...especially after Claudia, that worry was my constant companion.”

Isaac still didn’t think that I was the same, but he nodded, and let Jordan pick Sergei up.

“I realize that you want him close to you, but we want you to be around as long as possible. If your lung collapses again...” She didn’t finish her sentence, but Isaac didn’t need her to. There was still a chance that he could leave Sergei fatherless...Well...mostly. Jordan’s new role would ensure that unless they both passed away, Sergei would always have someone. Still, it wasn’t the time for Isaac to leave.

“Now, how are you feeling?”

“Breathing hurts.” Isaac explained, not wanting to hide anything in case it was significant. “But, I figured that after what happened, that’s par for the course.”

“Well, some tenderness is to be expected, but if it becomes a hindrance to normal breathing, I need you to tell me right away.”

“I will.” Isaac said.

“We also need to keep an eye on your food intake.” Melissa continued, her tone businesslike as she moved forward to stand next to Isaac. Without any hesitation, she reached down and lifted his blanket up, something that made Isaac scowl in protest, though any embarrassment he had metamorphosed into morbid curiosity at the state of his body.

Isaac didn’t have to guess where he was shot, the two giant bandages behaved as very clear signs to where the wounds were hidden, but it was the bruising that surprised him.

A dull rainbow of blues, yellows, purples, and blacks inked its way across his skin, showing the lethal brutality of the bullets that had pierced them.

Isaac looked up to see Jordan glaring at the wounds as though they were trophies of his failures and Sergei hiding his head in Jordan’s shoulder. Stiles, Derek, and John all seemed to share Jordan’s anger and pain, and Isaac was glad that the rest of his friends weren’t there. His silence was still guaranteed, but he did not think

that he could see the pity and rage in their eyes when he still saw the entire debacle as partially his fault.

Melissa pulled off one of the bandages which quickly pulled Isaac from his thoughts as he grunted in pain.

“What did you do?” Jordan demanded immediately in an angry voice.

“Took off his bandage so I could make sure there wasn’t an infection.” Melissa said, sardonically. “If you’d prefer to let him get sepsis, I can leave.”

“Well...you hurt him.” Jordan said defensively, though his cheeks were burning in shame.

“No, vydrachka, Liam hurt me. That was just a reminder.”

“We’ll definitely need to up your meds, but otherwise, these are looking great.”

Isaac didn’t see what was so ‘great’ about the bruises crossing his body. He had grown up with enough contusions to know that they were anything but ‘great’.

“Papa is all purple, I don’t think that’s great.” Sergei argued crossing his arms, making Isaac smile through his pain.

“No, the bruising is rather unfortunate, but the wounds are not infected, which can only be good. I think while he still has a ways to go,” she said, eyeing him critically, “he’s on the right path.”

“Well, I promise not to try out for the football team for a few weeks.” Isaac said, flatly.

“This isn’t a joking matter.” Melissa warned. “Your lung *collapsed*, Isaac, this is the time to sit back and enjoy the easy life.”

“Oh, I’ll keep him bedridden, even if it means he ends up hating me.” Jordan said.

“Never.” Isaac said, quickly, even though he knew that Jordan had been joking. “I could never hate you, vydrachka.”

“I mean it, though, babe. If Melissa says bedrest, I’m going to take that very literally.”

It was a mark of how much Jordan cared for him. Isaac knew, from how much just *breathing* hurt that he’d probably not argue with laying back, and letting his body heal.

“So, I can go home soon?” Isaac asked, not feeling safe in a hospital where he was prone to panic attacks and where he still expected Liam to come around the corner, dressed in scrubs, like nothing had happened. And Isaac still had terrible memories of Sergei laying in a bed just like his, unconscious with his illness.

Melissa shook her head, though, shattering his hopes. “Well...soon, but not certainly not today or tomorrow. Isaac, we have to keep an eye on things.”

Isaac looked at Jordan and Sergei, before nodding. If he had his family beside him, he was willing to suffer the location.

Notes for the Chapter:

Exam time (not finals!) at school so expect more breaks between chapters!
Thank you to all the people giving me kudos, it gives me warm, fuzzy feelings.

Sergei's snarky line was one of my favorites.

64. Without You

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac convalesces.

Isaac

Isaac quickly learned that he was adverse to sleep, even in the presence of Jordan and Sergei. The arms that had once given him such comfort could no longer hold his nightmares at bay as Jordan wasn't allowed to sleep with him.

Liam may have been dead and buried, but his memory still lingered in the darkest areas of Isaac's mind, like a cockroach, waiting for the lights to go out before it emerged, and nestled in his dreams.

Isaac dreamed of horrors. Of Liam's gun blasting Sergei away, of his cock thrusting roughly into him, of swollen graves dragging him to the depths of hell once again.

Isaac had survived and surviving meant remembering. It meant suffering the burdens of memory, reliving the past in dreams, and expecting it to come out with gun from under the bed.

Jordan was there when he awoke, though. Covered in sweat, panting, terrified, Jordan didn't care how Isaac woke up, he would reach out and sooth Isaac by rubbing his forehead and whispering to him. Isaac was prepared to offer the same comfort to Sergei, but his son seemed to be perfectly content while sleeping in Jordan's arms, something that Isaac's didn't even feel jealous over. If he was going to share fatherhood with Jordan, he'd have to learn to allow a shift in the amount of time he could spend with Sergei. It wasn't as though his son could sleep in his bed with him.

And it was that problem that was welling up inside of Isaac, and he didn't know what would snap first: He had a dire, instinctual drive to take Sergei and flee to somewhere far away. The world had betrayed them both, and locked away as they were in the hospital, Isaac could feel safe, especially with two officers of the law standing above his bed, but the outside? That terrified him. He wondered how many enemies he'd see around every corner, and how long it would be

before he would entrust others to take charge of Sergei. Jordan was fine, and Isaac thought that perhaps he would allow Stiles or Derek to watch him, but Isaac didn't know who else he could trust with his son.

He also faced a crisis that he feared might end up ruining his relationship with Jordan. He had been violated in more ways than one, and with his nightmares brining about a nocturnal rerun of his rape, he didn't know if he would be comfortable with Jordan touching him intimately for a while. He had planned and looked forward to sharing that most private part of himself with Jordan, a true consummation of their love for one another, but he didn't know when he would be able to cope with such an activity again.

Melissa had informed him of the extent of the damage to his body, which had included stitches in his torn and abused rectum, and he knew that at the very least, Jordan would be patient enough to wait until he was healed before even thinking of asking for such an act, but Isaac knew that his psychological scars would take a lot longer to heal.

When Isaac awoke on his third day in the hospital, he received a momentary shock by all the faces around his bed. Allison, Scott, Jackson, and Lydia as well as Stiles, Derek, and John who had all refused to leave.

When he opened his eyes, everyone had been in their own, light conversations, but it didn't take Sergei long to see that he was awake.

"Papa, your friends came to see you."

"I see that." Isaac whispered, a little shakily. Though he felt safe, the presence of so many people was temporarily shocking.

"Melissa let us in-." Scott began to explain, but Melissa herself spoke over him. Isaac had no seen her behind the group and their balloons, bouquets, and stuffed animals, but her authority was no less effective, even from a hiding spot.

"On the condition that Isaac's health isn't adversely affected. And this can't be an all-night thing."

"I know, mom, but...we needed to see him. It's been three days." Scoot pouted, his trademarked puppy dog eyes making an appearance that even Isaac couldn't help but smile at. Despite his minor panic, it felt good to see them all, especially

Scott, who seemed to have stood down his mother into allowing them into his room.

“Well, I needed to get you guys out of the waiting room, anyway, it was starting to smell ripe.”

Isaac’s smile fell. If he had hear Melissa correctly, that meant-

“You guys have been in the waiting room for three days?” He asked, touched by their patience and perseverance.

“Like we were going to go home without seeing you.” Jackson said with a scoff. “Be serious, Lahey.”

“But three days...” Isaac whispered.

“Which is why you’ll have to forgive these.” Scott said, shaking a bouquet at him, the leaves and flowers definitely droopier than they no doubt have been when they were fresh.

“No, Scott, I think I’ll kick you all out for subpar flowers.” Isaac said with a chuckle that made his lungs hurt. Isaac winced and Melissa’s eyes glared at him from across the room.

“Isaac, I swear to God...”

“I know, I’m sorry. Can they stay, though?”

Isaac didn’t even fear a panic attack, anymore. It had seemed possible when he had first woken up, but he knew that he was safe. He had friends and family surrounding him, and a lot of love, which was something to hold onto. He knew that he wouldn’t be able to pull through without his friends beside him. Isaac was secure enough to admit that he’d need help before he felt like himself again. The fact that he didn’t fear his friends was certainly encouraging.

“Well, I’m a little outnumbered, so they can stay, but Isaac, you need to take it easy.”

“I’m easy, I’m laying back, and I’m trying not to laugh, but...” Isaac sighed under the concerned eye of his boyfriend, and nodded. “I’ll be easy.” He

promised.

He knew that they were all worried about him, and he was a little worried, himself, but it was amazing to see so many people there for him, and it felt good to laugh again, even if it hurt. It was a sign that his life could be normal, again.

“We brought presents.” Jacksons said, holding up a large, red bag. “I mean, you’re not allowed to laugh at them, but we thought it might help you pass the time.”

Isaac appreciated the gesture, but he *had* time. Barring an infection or sudden aneurism, he had nothing but time. Time to spend with Sergei and Jordan. Time to cook for his friend’s on Sunday nights. Time for everything that he wanted to do.

“I’m just happy that you all showed up, but thank you.”

It was Jordan who passed out the presents, which included stuffed Pokémon in lieu of bears or more traditional animals, a sly smile from Scott told Isaac exactly who had bought it. There was a large quantity of candy, cookies, and even a few pierogi.

“They’re nowhere as good as yours, but I figured that you wouldn’t be up for cooking for a little while.” Allison explained. Isaac still smiled at the small touch of home that was wrapped up in the food.

It seemed that they had piled the cheaper gifts on top, for though Isaac was pleased with his presents, Jordan’s eyebrow rose as he pulled out two, new 3ds’s, one after the other.

“You and Jordan have to share, but-.” Jackson began, but Isaac cut him off, feeling a little irritated.

“You guys...” He sighed. “This is too much.”

“This is all on Jackson, we told him that it’d be showing you up to buy them, but...” Scott said.

“It’s not even that. These are expensive, Jackson.”

“I am a lawyer, Isaac.” Jackson enunciated with a smirk. “And I will be very hurt if you try to return my lovely gifts. You’ll be going to work soon, and I’m not trying to show you up or prove anything, but...I was terrible person when we were growing up, and you gave me a second chance. That made me realize that I care about you and your son, and when you went missing...we were all worried. And then you get found, but you were hurt, and when you got better, I realized that I still felt guilty for what I did to you growing up. Just...let me show affection the way that I know how?”

“It is his way.” Lydia explained.

Isaac relented, but not only because he knew Jackson to be stubborn, but because he could see Sergei’s eyes itching towards the handheld system. He was still frustrated, merely needing his friend’s presence to be happy. He knew that because of Jackson’s young life, the man thought money could buy forgives and absolution, but Isaac was only happy that he was there, and that he had said that he cared about Sergei.

“Thank you, Jackson.”

“You’re welcome, man.”

“We can keep them, papa?” Sergei asked, his interests clear.

“Yes, Seryozha, you can keep your new game, but what do you tell Jackson?”

“Spasibo (Thank you), dyadya Jackson!” Sergei cried, taking the box from Jordan.

“I’m a dyadya now?” He asked, raising an eyebrow. “I thought you said that you already had uncles.” Jackson gestured to Stiles and Derek.

“Papa says that family is important, and he forgave you, so I guess it’s okay. Besides, we were with a bad man, and I don’t think that you’re like him, so you must be good.”

“I wasn’t when I was younger, but your papa is a very special man.” Jackson said in a thick voice. “I’m just sad that it took me this long to realize that.”

“Well, let’s make a clear cut distinction between bullying and abduction.” Isaac

said with a small smile, which he was only using to cover up the tears he felt scratching at the back of his throat.

Jordan, perhaps predictably, placed a hand on Isaac's shoulder.

"Is it hurting too bad?"

"It's fine, vydrachka, I just...we were alone, just Sergei and me. And I'm not just talking about Liam, I mean before we came back here, we were alone, and coming back home...finding all of you here to help us...I can't tell you how much it means to me."

"That's what family is for, moy plemyanik."

Isaac nodded, shuddering to think of what could have happened if Liam had taken him with Jordan or John to help look for him.

He had no complaints about Sergei adding Jackson into their expanding family, though he didn't know how long he'd be able to remain stoic in the face of a spoiling, rich uncle.

Later that evening, after a promise to return as soon as they could, Isaac sat Jordan helping him figure out the mechanics of the *Pokémon: Omega Ruby* game that Jackson had bought him. Sergei was asleep in John's arms, while Stiles and Derek slumbered as well.

Jordan looked around to make sure that everyone was asleep, before nudging Isaac with his elbow.

"I love you." He whispered. "I...I know we promised not to take blame, but...I missed you so much."

"I missed you, too, and so did Sergei." Isaac said, quietly, watching his sleeping son twitch in response to his dreams. "I...you saved me, Jordan, and I mean in more way than one. I was...maybe not prepared, but I had come to terms with the possibility that he might kill me, but I...I knew that you'd look after him."

"I didn't want it like that. I mean...I...of course, would have, but...I dreamed of it, babe. Sergei and I...I don't think that either of us would have done very well." Jordan voice was thick as he stared down at the game with misty eyes. "I can't...

without you.”

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm sorry, I'm just really busy, I still didn't even finish a chapter, this was just because I had typed so far ahead.

65. Amends

Isaac

Isaac longed for Jordan. He was still rather certain that he was not able to be fully intimate with the man, but he longed for a kiss, even Jordan's arms wrapping around him would make him feel worlds better than he did, isolated as he was on the bed.

It seemed like it would be so easy to just...reach out, take his face, and kiss the man. Yet, when he moved to do so, his lung tweaked, and he let out a low whine.

"Babe, what's wrong?" Jordan asked, his voice full of concern, as always.

"It's driving me insane that you can't hold me." Isaac explained. "I'm...I...I missed you so much while I was gone, and I spent every minute living in fear, not knowing whether I would live or die, and all I wanted, besides Sergei's safety, was to be in your arms, again, and now, I can't even have that."

"Oh, when we get home, I'm locking you and Sergei down in bed for about week, and not letting you go." Jordan said with a chuckle. "But...even though I want what you do, I still have to admit, most of me is just relieved that you're alright. I mean...I held you in my arms, babe, while you bled out, and I thought I had lost you, so...for me, this is enough for now." He said, reaching out with tender fingers to run them through his hair.

Isaac leaned into the touch, the small contact enough to ease his fears, a little. Jordan's eyes blazed into his own, the dark room making a perfect contrast for Isaac to get lost in a sea of green. It was easy, when they were essentially alone, to allow himself to bask in the love that radiated from the man.

"What happened?" Isaac asked, needing a distraction, lest he begged Jordan to lay in bed with him, something he was sure Jordan would eventually concede to him.

"What happened when, babe?"

"After I kicked you out." Isaac responded, guiltily.

It was something that would eat him up for the rest of his life. It would be his eternal demon, that Sergei had been through hell, and all of it was because he had sent Jordan away. He wouldn't speak of it, it would be something that he would bury away, but he'd never stop being sorry for having had the power to keep Sergei safe, and shattering it by being petty.

"Well..." Jordan sighed, his eyes filled with old hurt. Isaac reached out, feeling it was safe enough to hold the man's hand to reassure him that they wouldn't be parted again. "I went home, and I was...distraught. I mean, I...I'll admit, I didn't handle losing you very well. I just...went home and kind of moped about." He looked a little embarrassed, but Isaac didn't judge him. He himself had been less than chipper when he had kicked Jordan out. It was only by comparing the feelings before and the ones he had now that he realized that it wasn't Jordan's actions that had made him feel bad, but rather the *lack* of his presence.

"I wasn't dancing around the house." Isaac said so that Jordan could continue without guilt.

"So, I was home, and I got a call from Stiles, telling me that we had left the door open, and I knew...I mean, I didn't want to believe it, but I knew that you were gone. Losing you by your choice was one thing, but the moment I knew that Liam got you, I got back to work to try and find you. I...was led astray a few times, but I didn't stop, and I didn't sleep, since I knew that I only had a limited time to get to you."

"I tried everything, combed the evidence, but...in the end, it was his grandmother. I managed to get her address and she led me to you."

"That was nice of her." Isaac murmured, a little shocked, knowing that without Liam's grandmother, he could still be subjected to the same torture, if not dead. He felt a silent affection for the woman who had most likely saved his life and that of his son's.

"She seemed...surprised, but they also seemed to have spent a lot of time together. I mean...I can't even imagine not knowing a member of my own family. My father was a cruel man, but I knew it. I don't...I don't know what it would be like if he had had a secret life."

"Especially a criminal one." Isaac added, bitterly.

“Can I...do you want to share...I mean, you don’t have to...” Jordan said, quickly, looking at Isaac, nervously. “But...I’m here for you, forever, and if you...want to talk about, I’ll listen.”

Isaac shook his head. It wasn’t as though he couldn’t talk about it, though he was unsure how long his monologue would be before he broke it off. No, the main hindrance was how close he was to Jordan, the care and worry in the man’s eyes, which Isaac didn’t want to see extinguished for pity or even disgust at what Isaac had been forced to go through. There was a certain amount of time that he allowing himself to keep it to himself, though. He felt as though it would be hypocritical of him to keep the pain and scars he was feeling to himself when he had been so angry with Jordan for keeping him in the dark. Unlike the guilt he bore for kicking Jordan out, his own pain was something that he would share... when he was ready.

Isaac’s survival was a wakeup call as far as Isaac was concerned. He had seen the dangerous path his life could take, the bitter loneliness without Jordan, and he didn’t want that back. They could have something beautiful, Sergei could have two fathers, and they could be *happy*, as long as they took the right steps.

“I will...one day, but for today...tonight, just...”

“It’s alright, babe. Whenever you’re ready, we’ll talk about it. As long as you’re here and you’re safe, I...just want you to feel comfortable.”

“But I’m not, because I’m in this bed without you.” Isaac said with a small pout.

“That’s still sexy.” Jordan whispered, leaning down to give Isaac a proper kiss on the lips. It felt chaste, like when they had first started seeing each other, but Isaac knew that it was because of his injury, there was no denying the love that sparked between them.

When Jordan pulled back, he kept his face close, making Isaac chuckle.

“What?” Jordan asked, his eyes shining with amusement.

“You’re here, and it’s....not where I thought it would happen, but we’re together. Also...”

“I need to brush my teeth.” Jordan said, pulling back, though with a grin.

“You need to brush your teeth.” Isaac agreed with a chuckle.

“I couldn’t leave, and I still don’t want to. I just...I know you’re the one who went through everything, but...I don’t want to leave.”

“Stinky breath or being alone...” Isaac said with a mock pondering tone. “I think I’d rather my boyfriend stays here.”

“Thank you.” Jordan whispered, taking his heat back, but keeping his hold on Isaac’s hand. “And this is okay?”

“What do you mean?” Isaac asked, cocking his head.

“Isaac, we haven’t been dating very long, but I recognize a panic attack when I see one. I...I didn’t want to bring it up in front of Sergei, but...that doctor scared you, and so did Scott and the others. I don’t...I don’t want to be the one to scare you.”

“You just said that you could tell when I’m having one, does it seem like I’m freaking out?”

Jordan shook his head.

“Jordan, you’ve never scared me, and even as...messed up as I am, I know that I’m safe with you. He was going to shoot me, vydrachka,” Jordan’s hand tightened, “and you removed the threat without any hesitation. I *know* that I’m safe with you. I...I’m fucking terrified of what’s going to happen when we leave, but for the moment, I’m content.”

“I’ll protect you, Isaac. I’m not letting this happen, again.” Jordan promised in a low voice. “I mean...I know I already promised, but-.”

“No blame.” Isaac reminded, bringing Jordan’s hand to his mouth to give it a kiss.

“No blame, but I *will* protect you, and keep your son safe, as well.”

“I know, I trust you.” Isaac said, truthfully. There was still no doubt in his mind that Jordan was not at fault for Liam’s behavior and the man could, and would, keep him and Sergei from harm.

“Even after...I lied?” Jordan asked, ducking his head in shame.

“I...I was mad, but...I realized why you did it. I still don’t approve, and I want you to make sure that we stay on equal terms for the rest of our relationship, but...I get why you did it, and I understand that from your perspective, it was a defensive gesture. You were trying to protect me, and you made a mistake, but your intentions were pure.” Isaac explained. “I...” He let out a yawn that he had been trying to hold in. “I don’t think that it would be right of me to fault you for that.”

“We *are* equal, babe. I wasn’t...I mean...I wasn’t trying to lock you out, or make you inferior, and I know that it was wrong, but I swear, it was only to...you looked like you were in so much *pain* when you went into a panic attack, and I just wanted you to be happy.”

“I had you, I *have* you, vydrachka, I’m happy.” Isaac said. “Pain...pain is part of life. I’m going to get hurt, I’m going to cry, and part of a relationship is understanding that you can’t always protect me from it.”

“I can if I shoot everyone who wants to hurt you.” Jordan said, not sounding like he was joking.

Isaac sighed. “And if I trip and break my arm? Are you going to shoot the curb? Jordan...Guns aren’t the answer to everything. They’re not even the answer to most things. What...what I had to face from Liam...I’m grateful, more grateful than you’ll ever know that you saved me, but...*his* gun was the greatest thing that I feared. The greatest thing that Sergei feared.”

“I’m sorry.” Jordan whispered, looking forlorn. He didn’t say anything else, and they sat in silence for a moment, before Isaac spoke, again.

“Are you...I mean, are you getting in trouble...for how Liam died?” Isaac asked, wanting to change the subject to remove the guilt from Jordan’s face, because consequences or not, it was still the single, bravest thing he had ever seen anyone do.

Jordan shook his head. “John was there, he testified for me that it was a lawful discharge of a side arm.”

“That’s....that’s...good.” Isaac said, feeling his answer was a little less

enthusiastic than he felt in regards to Jordan not going to prison, but the yawn that had punctuated his sentence ruined it.

“Alright, that’s two in the same number of minutes, you need to get some sleep, babe.”

“Only if you promise to join me.” Isaac said, noticing the dark rings around Jordan’s eyes.

“I’ll sleep, once I’m sure that you are, babe.” Jordan promised, getting up to place another kiss on Isaac’s forehead. “I love you, so much.”

“I love you, too.”

Notes for the Chapter:

Don't ask me why this is going on so long, it's just a thing.
I'm really sorry about how long the time is between the chapters!

66. Serotonin

Jordan

A week into Isaac's hospital stay, Jordan couldn't see any improvement in Isaac's anxiety. He still panicked whenever any of the hospital staff came in, with the exception of Melissa. Jordan had made a promise to always keep Isaac safe, but found himself struggling to figure out how to protect him from the average person who really meant no harm. All he could do was try and reassure Isaac that he was safe, but his words seemed to have little effect.

Sergei was worried. Jordan had taken it upon himself to take Sergei out of the room to get him some food occasionally, though it only ever made his son more anxious than normal. Sergei would jitter and shake while he scarfed his food down, before running back to Isaac's room.

It made Jordan feel like a failure both as a father and as a boyfriend. He couldn't relax Isaac and he couldn't reassure Sergei that everything was alright. They were in a brighter area than they had been for a long time, but they still had a lot of problems to deal with.

Jordan wasn't exactly sure what would happen when Isaac left the hospital, and the reaction the man held for the hospital staff did not bode well for Isaac's behavior when they left, and it had Jordan worried. He would never again take an action without consulting Isaac, but that didn't banish his desire to see Isaac happy and safe. He didn't know how he would be able to do that when Isaac was scared of people who couldn't be 'dealt with'.

It wasn't fair. Isaac had been the victim, an innocent trapped in the jaws of a horrible person, and he was stuck with the consequences. Jordan wanted so much to make Isaac better, if only for Sergei's peace of mind, but he was at a loss as to how to achieve it.

"You know, even when you're lost in thought, you're pretty sexy." Isaac whispered, causing Jordan to look down, automatically.

"I'm sorry." He whispered. "I just...it's still hard to have you here, and I...I don't like seeing you scared."

Isaac's eyes dropped, worrying Jordan.

"I didn't mean anything bad." He said, quickly. "I mean, I know it's not your fault, but I just want you to be happy. If there's anyone who deserves it, it's you."

A small, tentative smile returned to Isaac's lips. "I...I'm happy when I'm with you. I know you worry, but...there's nothing that we can do. I just...have to learn to be around people, again. And if you remember, I wasn't too keen on people around Sergei to begin with, so...maybe this is a sign that I needed to work on that. He has to start school soon, I can't...lock him away."

"Or yourself." Jordan added.

"Or myself." Isaac said, nodding. "Stiles found me a job, and...I have to go and teach." He sounded unsure, but at least he had said the words.

"That's right, and if I have to, I'll join you...or stay with Sergei, whatever makes you feel more comfortable.

Isaac chuckled. "I love you, you know? It's a little...odd having someone who wants to always keep me safe, but, even though I find it a little much, sometimes, I want you to know that I appreciate it."

"I love you." Jordan said. "It's kind of my job to make sure that you're taken care of."

"Which I would normally have an indignant response to, but I've come to kind of readjust my world view in light of recent events."

"It's nothing bad to have someone looking out for you, babe. Do you...think it's bad that you look out for Sergei?"

"No." Isaac said, his eyes drifting to his son who was showing Stiles the new Pokémon that he had caught. "And I don't think that's it's bad that you want to look out for me, either. It just makes me feel like a kid, and that's not the context that I want our relationship to be."

"Yeah, let's avoid thinking of you like a kid." Jordan said, taking Isaac's hand. It was crucial to him that Isaac understood how he saw him, and that he knew that

he was loved, not as an object to be protected, but as a man who was an amazing father and an all-around noble person.

“Papy, look at what I got!” Sergei cried, choosing to throw himself into Jordan’s arms while waving his handheld around, excitedly.

Isaac looked at the screen, a small smile crossing his lips, and Jordan did the same.

“Good job, kiddo.” Jordan praised Sergei, noticing the boy had defeated his first gym leader with his new Pokémon.

“You’re most definitely my son.” Isaac agreed, nodding his head.

A soft knock at the door brought Isaac into his fear mode, Jordan could feel him tense around his hand, even though it was only Melissa.

“Hey, guys.” She greeted with a bright smile.

“Hi, Melissa!” Sergei sang. “Look at my new Pokémon!”

“Very cool, buddy.” She praised, actually looking at the screen before ruffling his hair. It was one of the reasons Jordan liked Melissa, and the feeling wasn’t only present in himself, Isaac’s hand relaxed a little. She seemed to genuinely care about Sergei and Isaac, something that Jordan really couldn’t argue against.

“So, I have good news for everyone here.” Melissa began, taking a look through Isaac’s chart. “Looking through Isaac’s progress over the past few days, Doctor McFarland and I agree that he could finish his convalescence in a place more comfortable.”

Jordan knew what she meant, but Sergei cocked his head. “What does that mean?”

“It means that your papa can go home today, if he wants.” Melissa explained with a smile.

“Ah, really?” Isaac asked, his eyes lighting up with the first true excitement Isaac had seen in him since the abduction. He moved to sit up, but Jordan reached out to keep him still.

Melissa nodded, her eyes thanking Jordan. “You’re by no means completely healed, so you need to take it easy, which means bedrest for a while.”

“I can live with that as long as I’m home.” Isaac said.

Derek, Stiles, John, and Sergei all seemed to be equally pleased with the news, but Jordan was a little more hesitant.

“Are...are you sure? I mean...I don’t want anything...anything bad to happen once we get there.”

Jordan saw Isaac’s face fall and felt bad, but it wasn’t in him to go through the fear of losing Isaac, again.

“Well, he won’t be playing any contact sports for a few more months, but he’s healed to the point that he can go home. I’d want daily progress reports, but he will be safe.”

“Vydrachka, I promise to be super careful, but...I’d like to go home.” Isaac whispered, holding Jordan’s hand.

“I know, I just...worry about you.”

“And you can worry about me at home. It might be fun to have you as my little helper.” Isaac said with a smile.

“I want to help, too, papa!” Sergei interjected.

“You’ll help, Seryozha, I promise.” Isaac said, the excitement in his voice a little infectious.

“We’ve got you on a series of antibiotics, and you’re going to have to keep them up while you’re at home.” Melissa said.

“What do we have to watch for?” Jordan said, willing to trust the nurse that Isaac was fit to return home, but not willing to take any chances when it came to the health and safety of his boyfriend.

“Well, the first sign that something’s wrong would be a fever. It means an infection, but I don’t expect one to show this late, especially with the antibiotics.

If the pain gets to be too much, I need to see you right away.” Melissa said, turning to Isaac.

“What about food? Am I stuck on this liquid diet?” He asked, making a face.

Melissa chuckled. “For another week, at least. And when you do move onto solids, it’s going to have to be like when Sergei was young: mashed potatoes, broths, boiled carrots. You’re not going to be eating Russian for a while.”

“It’s a sacrifice, but I think I can live with it.” Isaac said, shrugging.

“Normally, I’d have you come back in in about a week, but I think I could make a stop by. Scott mentioned that he wanted to stay around you and Sergei. If you’re doing better after two weeks, we’ll see about getting you some real food, again.”

Isaac

Isaac could feel his throat tightening as he signed the last of his forms. He wasn’t sure why, but the thought of going home was extremely reassuring and made him feel like he was healing even more. It was a sign that life might return to normal, and the thought of Jordan sleeping in the same bed as him was more than enough to bring tears of joy to his eyes.

He had missed Jordan’s warmth beside him, even more after almost dying. Isaac had come to grips with the fragility of life, how easily it could all be ripped away, and with his new knowledge, and he didn’t want to waste a single moment without Jordan or Sergei or even his friends. Isaac had heard people talk about never wanting to waste a moment, but they usually did so after a minor event. Isaac, having nearly walked with death, felt it much more deeply.

Isaac was bound and determined to overcome his panic attacks, no matter what it took. He wanted to be able to take Sergei to the park, the zoo, and anywhere else his son wanted to go. He wanted to go on dates with Jordan, and experience all the sexual flavors in between. He wanted to be able to face his new job with courage and determination instead of fear and worry.

For Isaac, going home was an important part of that process. If he could

recapture a bit of his normal life, he felt as though the other pieces might fall into place. He refused to become an agoraphobe, or lock himself away, but when the doctor came in to give him one, final checkup, he could feel the terror flowing through him.

It was embarrassing, but more than that it was the feeling of being ‘less than’ that bothered Isaac. He could see everyone else in the room comfortable around the rude but helpful man, and he felt damaged for having a panic attack.

“If you’d like, we can have a conversation with a psychologist to get you on an SSRI.” The doctor offered, quietly.

“What’s that?” Jordan asked, trying to sooth Isaac by rubbing circles on his back. Isaac was appreciative of the gesture, but would have preferred the doctor to stop his prodding. He felt very uncomfortable with male contact except for with a limited number of individuals.

“A selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor.” Doctor McFarland explained. “It’s the first thing that we prescribe for someone with panic attacks or anxiety disorders.”

Isaac wondered why he had been forced to suffer under a week of stress if there was a pill that could have helped him, but terror was the prominent emotion on his mind. He didn’t have the energy to be angry with his entire body tensed up against the perceived threat.

“Babe, is that something that you’d want to consider?” Jordan asked, no inflection in his voice as to what he would have preferred.

Isaac trusted in Jordan’s love, but still wondered how long the man would be willing to put up with his panic attacks.

“If...if they’ll help.” He whispered. It was a step and it had to be taken if he was ever going to return to semblance of normative relations with the world.

Notes for the Chapter:

Moving along. :) A Sergei perspective chapter coming up.

An SSRI is what I take for my PTSD, so, I'm letting Isaac have some, too.

67. Confirmation.

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan is unsure of something.

Isaac

Isaac didn't complain about being wheeled out of the hospital in a wheelchair, especially not with Jordan pushing him. He was just so happy to be free that he joined Sergei in a laugh, though he couldn't run around like his son did. Even though he was smiling and feeling the sunshine, he felt a small surge of guilt at the energy that Sergei was displaying as he ran around. Sergei had been cooped up for too long, it was obvious in the way he ran around, being careful to avoid Isaac, but definitely being free himself. Isaac did notice, however, that he stayed close to the group, and anytime he took more than a few steps away, he looked behind him, and hurried back.

"I'm sorry that you haven't had the chance to play, recently." Isaac whispered when Sergei jogged close, his breath ragged, and a grin splitting his face.

"Jordan said that he'd take me to the park." Sergei said. "But I wanted to stay by you after what happened."

Isaac felt his heart break a little at Sergei's willingness to stay by him and Jordan's offer. He knew how important it was to Jordan to stay by his side, and was surprised that Jordan had thought of Sergei. He wasn't sure exactly *why* he was surprised, though. One of the first things that had attracted him to Jordan was how much he looked after Sergei.

"Thank you for that." He said, looking up at Jordan.

"Just because I didn't raise one, doesn't mean that I don't know they need exercise. He was just...worried about you. We all were."

"I know, and I really appreciate it. I-." Isaac felt his heart stop as his sentence did. They had reached Jordan's car and for a moment, he thought he saw a grinning face in the mirror. A face belonging to Liam, but when he turned around with a gasp, all he saw was his friends, his uncle, his son, and his boyfriend, all

looking at him worriedly.

“Babe, are you alright?” Jordan asked, slowly reaching out to touch his shoulder. Isaac hated it, but he had to tell himself that it was Jordan and that he was safe. Liam was gone, but it still didn’t stop Isaac from jerking back.

Jordan took a step back, his hands up in the air, making Isaac feel terrible. His heart was thundering in his chest, but he could recognize that Sergei was worried, and that was something he couldn’t allow. If he couldn’t be safe in public, he’d have no one to blame but himself if Sergei developed a complex because he couldn’t touch Jordan.

“I’m...I’m fine.” He whispered. “I...I thought that I got my hand caught in the chair.”

“Papa, are you hurt?” Sergei asked, rushing forward. He took both of Isaac’s hands and looked them over.

“I’m alright, son, I was mistaken.” Isaac said, letting out a sigh of relief when Sergei smiled.

It was killing Isaac to have to lie to him, but he refused to let Sergei be afraid of the world...even if he was.

Isaac could tell that Jordan knew that he was lying, but knew that he wouldn’t bring it up in front of Sergei. Stiles, Derek, and John all looked him with a mixture of pity and worry, but stayed just as quiet.

Isaac pulled at Jordan’s hand, taking it into his own, reassuringly. He felt bad that he had flinched, resolute as he was in the knowledge that Jordan would never, *never* hurt him.

“You’re safe. I’ll keep you from...pinching your hand in the chair.” Jordan said, quietly. “I will always there to keep you and your hands safe.”

Jordan was serious, but Isaac chuckled a little. “I know, vydrachka. My hands are always safe with you.”

“Along with the rest of you.” Jordan promised.

Jordan helped Isaac into the car, pressing a kiss to his cheek, before stepping back, and shutting the door for him. Sergei opened his own door, but Jordan helped him buckle up, a small detail that Isaac found to be sweet.

“We’re finally going home, papa!” Sergei said, doing a small dance in his chair that Isaac couldn’t help but smile at.

“We are, kiddo! But, once I’m better, I’m going to take you out every day until school starts.” Isaac replied. If he made it a vow, he knew that he be much more likely to follow through on it. He was scared, terrified of the world, and his recent panic attack, that had come in lieu of absolutely *nothing*, was even more proof that he had some work to do, but he’d do it for Sergei. There was nothing that he wouldn’t do for Sergei.

“Will Jordan come with us?” Sergei asked as said man pulled himself into the car, looking at Isaac with soft expectancy.

“Yeah, babe, will I?”

“Jordan isn’t leaving my side for a long, *long* time.” Isaac said. “Wherever we goes, he’ll go...if he’s alright with that.”

Jordan moved forward and pressed his lips against Isaac’s, pulling him into a kiss. “I’m not letting you out of my sight.” He said as he pulled away.

“That’s exactly what I’d hoped to hear.” Isaac said, smiling in spite of his earlier panic.

“Then, let’s get you home.” Jordan said, turning to the wheel, and leading them home.

Isaac was allowed to walk into the house that he had come to view as his own, though Jordan kept a tight grip on his elbow as he walked. Not bruising or painful, but enough to ensure that the inevitable tiredness didn’t send him sprawling onto his ass.

Isaac was forced to move at a snail’s pace, anything more was simply too painful, but he still smiled as he unlocked the door, and Sergei ran inside. Isaac though there might have been bad memories attached to them being in the house alone, but it was still home to him. The scents and the sights were far more

comforting than they were frightening. One mistake, but it was still a bastion.

Sergei certainly seemed thrilled that they were back. He was running through the house, setting Isaac a little on edge, but he didn't have the heart to stop him. Liam was dead, and it would do no good to scare Sergei over a ghost.

Sergei did stop, though when he ran into Isaac's room, though he came back out, his face scrunched up.

"Papa, everything's different in your room." Sergei announced, running to take his hand. Sergei seemed eager, but he still walked slowly to accommodate Isaac's injuries.

Isaac's heart thundered in his chest as he moved towards the room. He didn't know how it would be to see the place that he had been kidnapped from.

When Isaac got to his room, he saw that things were indeed different, the shock of it making him not even aware of his fear.

None of the furniture was as he remembered it, there were posters of Pokémon, Superman, and Wolverine, juxtaposed with more artistic prints of Stiles and Derek holding each other.

"Hey, man, why are you in my room?" An amused voice asked. Isaac turned around to see that Stiles and Derek had arrived, both of them had soft grins on their faces as Sergei protested.

"But this is my papa's room." He argued.

"Not anymore, it's not." Derek said, moving forward, his eyes finding Isaac's. "Did you really think that we'd put you back in the room where it happened?"

"I...I hadn't even thought about it. I'm just...I can't take your room, guys." Isaac whispered, touched by his friend's kind offer. "I mean..." He turned to Stiles. "How did you two even do this?"

"Jackson, Scott, Allison, and Lydia did this." Stiles explained. "We...we don't mind changing rooms. I just feel bad because ours is upstairs."

"But-."

“I won’t hear a word against it, man.” Derek said with a grin. “It’s...it’s going to be hard the first few nights, and I think that this will help.”

He looked surprised when Isaac wrapped an arm around him in a weak hug. Stiles edged closer and under the watchful gaze of Jordan, joined in. Isaac felt a lump in his throat, and he sniffled back a few tears as he tried to remind himself that this was his family, and that this was what families did.

“Thank you.”

Jordan

Jordan had helped Isaac up the stairs to their new room. Isaac had requested, yet again that Jordan stay with him, which Jordan promised he would. Jordan had no intention of leaving Isaac on his own ever again, if he could help it. There was an impractical side to his desires, mainly that he would have to return to work one day, and Isaac had his own job that he was hoping to get, but for the time being, with the free days that John had given him, Jordan was more than content to lay down with Isaac in his bed, and trace patterns on his arm.

Sergei was curled up against the other side of Isaac, taking a nap while Isaac kept his eyes locked with Jordan.

“What do you want me to make you for dinner?” Jordan asked, loving the way that Isaac’s hair tickled his fingers.

“My options are still extremely limited.” Isaac responded. “But, if you know how to make a smoothie, I wouldn’t say no.”

“I could absolutely do that. What do you think Sergei wants?”

Isaac chuckled. “He’s your son, too, vydrachka, you can ask him.”

“I...I think some part of me still worries about overstepping my bounds when it comes to him.” Jordan said, his eyes drifting to Sergei. It was a little stupid, considering it was just asking what the boy would want for dinner, but he didn’t want to take the fact that Isaac trusted him for granted.

“I don’t want you to feel that way. In fact...after what happened, I...I’d like to make it a little more official.”

“What do you mean?” Jordan asked, though he felt as though he had a good idea what Isaac wanted.

“Before, it was something that I wanted to do, but...I just didn’t. Now that we have time, though. Jordan, I’d like for you to adopt him.”

Jordan smiled as he processed the thought. It would, of course, be nothing less than a great pleasure for him to be a legal father to Sergei, almost as much as the thought of marrying Isaac, and he pressed a kiss to Isaac’s forehead.

“Do you really mean it?”

“Of course.” Isaac said. “I mean...there’s the practical side: If anything happens to me, you would be able to take legal guardianship of him without too much hassle, but...there’s also the fact that I love you, he loves you, and you love us...right?”

Jordan nodded without hesitation. “Absolutely.”

“Then I’d like for him to have another parent, and I’d like that parent to be you.”

Jordan wasn’t sure exactly what he was feeling, at least not right away, it took him a moment to realize that he felt a bubble of fear and joy building within him. The weight of taking care of the son of the love of his life was something that filled him with dread. It was a scary prospect, similar, but different from merely being asked to look after Sergei.

At the same time, that Isaac trusted him with Sergei enough to even request it was certainly something to celebrate.

“Can I...I think that this is a big decision. Can I ask him, first? I wouldn’t feel comfortable doing it, if he wasn’t.”

Isaac chuckled, warm and rich. “Of course, vydrachka.” Reaching down, he shook Sergei, lightly.

Notes for the Chapter:

Next chapter will be from Sergei's perspective!

68. Big Words

Summary for the Chapter:

Sergei's feelings.

Sergei

Sergei didn't like the bad dreams. Ever since the bad man had taken him and his papa, Sergei had had bad dreams about the same bad man coming back to hurt him.

He knew that Jordan tried to protect him, just like his papa always had, but sleep was a place where he couldn't be protected. His papa wasn't there in his dreams and neither was Jordan.

When his papa woke him up, though, he saw both of them in bed together, smiling at him, and making him feel safe again.

He was glad that he and his papa had agreed to forgive Jordan for making a mistake, even if Sergei still wasn't sure exactly what had happened. He liked Jordan. He liked the way Jordan made him smile, and the way he made his papa happy...most days. In fact, Sergei could only think of one time that Jordan had made Isaac sad, and they had all been punished for it.

So when Sergei looked up to see both Jordan and his papa sitting up in bed, he smiled, and snuggled himself closer.

"Sergei, there's something that we both want to ask you." Isaac said.

"Are you two going to get married?" Sergei asked with a giggle. He knew that marriage was something that adults sometimes did, but he didn't understand the reason behind it. To him, it seemed like a silly game, and when he watched it happen on the television, he always thought that everyone looked silly. He hadn't seen two boys get married in the movies he had seen, but had seen it on the show that Stiles sometimes watched called 'the news'.

"One day, absolutely." Isaac said, looking at Jordan. His face turned red and he bit his lip as Jordan smiled. "But that's not what we wanted to talk to you about."

Isaac nudged Jordan, who chuckled, and looked Sergei in the eye.

“You know that I love you and your papa very much, right?” Jordan asked.

Sergei nodded.

“Well, I already consider you guys to be my family, but...you know that there’s a difference between...the law doesn’t see you as my family.”

Sergei didn’t know exactly what Jordan was talking about, but he nodded, anyway.

“You see, Sergei, if...if I really want to be your daddy, I have to adopt you, but...I don’t want to do that unless you say it’s okay.”

Sergei didn’t understand adults at all. If Jordan wanted to be his papa, he didn’t know why he couldn’t just *be* his papa. Sergei loved Jordan, and was willing to call him papa, he already did, so he didn’t understand what the problem was.

“But you *are* my papa, Jordan.”

“I know, and I’m...I can’t tell you how much it means to me that you see me that way, but can I make it legal?” Jordan asked, smiling.

Sergei didn’t see what difference it would make, but he nodded, anyway. It was obviously important to him.

“Thank you, Sergei.” Jordan said, a tear running down his cheek. He reached out and pulled Sergei into his lap. Sergei had noticed that after Liam, he didn’t like other people touching him, but he liked it when Jordan did. He supposed his papa must have felt the same, the same sense of safety that he felt. He had seen his papa get scared around some of the doctors, especially the mean one, but Jordan didn’t cause the same response.

“But you have to promise that you’ll keep my papa safe. I don’t think he likes people now.” Sergei whispered into Jordan’s ear.

It was easy to see, even for Sergei, that his papa wasn’t the same man he had been before. There were times when his eyes were full of fear, just like they had been in the days leading up to their leaving Chicago.

Sergei didn't understand most of the big words that doctors and nurses used, he didn't know a lot of things in the world, but he knew his papa, and he knew when his papa wasn't feeling at his best.

"I swear, Sergei." Jordan replied, just as quiet. "I'm sorry that he got hurt."

Sergei didn't blame Jordan for that. His papa had taught him that there were good people and bad people and sometimes the good people lost. Liam had won for a little while, but in the end, Jordan had saved them, which was the most important thing.

"It's not your fault." Sergei whispered before pulling back. "If you want to *really* be my papa, you have to learn Russian, though, so it would be something that we can all share."

"I promise." Jordan said with a wide grin. "I'm sorry that I didn't get any new words, recently..." He made a face. "And your Skittles! I'm sorry, kiddo, I've been kind of slacking lately, haven't I?"

"You were making sure that my papa was happy, so I don't mind." Sergei said.

"You're really amazing, you know that?" Jordan asked.

"Papa says that, too."

"That's because it's true." Jordan said, grabbing Sergei and tickling his ribs, making him squeal in laughter.

Isaac

Isaac didn't know which deity to thank, but there was certainly gratitude owed that Sergei could laugh after what had happened. It made him happy to see his son happy, but Sergei's easy acceptance of the legal proposition was enough to make him ecstatic.

It was enough, he decided. It was enough that they could be a family and Sergei could be happy, even if Isaac bore the mental scars for the rest of his life.

“Papa, I’m kind of hungry.” Sergei said around his gales of laughter.

“Then we need to get you something to eat.” Jordan said. “I can’t have my son going hungry.” He added as though he was trying it out, making Isaac chuckle. It fit him, calling Sergei his son, and Isaac was able to *smile* about it, instead of feeling jealous or insecure about it, which was a very encouraging response.

Isaac moved to get up, but Jordan scoffed, and gently pressed him back down.

“What part of ‘bed rest’ did you not get, babe?”

“The part where you’re actually going to keep me confined to the bed.” Isaac said with a huff.

“I wasn’t kidding, babe. The doctor said bed rest and rest in bed, you shall do.”

“Papa, I don’t want you getting hurt.” Sergei added, causing Isaac to smile, and hug his son.

He understood that they were worried about him, and he did what to stay healthy so he didn’t force Sergei to return to the hospital, but he didn’t like the thought of them being apart from him.

“Well...I suppose I should listen to my boys.” Isaac said, nodding.

“I’ll be right back, though.” Jordan said, no doubt guessing what was bothering Isaac. Isaac adored Jordan’s observation skills. “Unless...do you want me to stay?”

Isaac shook his head. He didn’t want to be left alone, but he understood that Sergei and Jordan couldn’t spend the rest of their lives up in the room with him. The house was safe, Jordan was there, and they still had the alarm, Isaac would feel comfortable with letting them leave.

“Do you want me to stay, papa?”

“No, son, you and Jordan go get some food, and bring me back something.”

“I love you, papa.” Sergei said, lightly wrapping his arms around Isaac’s neck.

“I love you, too, Sergei.” Isaac responded.

Isaac did surprisingly well on his own in the room. Stiles had been right, the unfamiliar room held no bad memories, and although Isaac wasn’t exactly ready to sing with joy or win any comfortable contests, he felt secure enough, in the easy silence.

He could smell bacon and hear a whirring blender a floor down, and he smiled, knowing that Jordan was probably doing everything in his power to serve him something that tasted good, while still remaining within the bounds the doctor had set.

Jordan just didn’t stop. Every day brought something new and exciting, kind things, marvelous things. Jordan was an amazing father, Isaac could already tell, and Sergei had only been calling him ‘papa’ for a few days. Isaac saw the concern and worry in his eyes, the second-nature defensiveness that came with being a father.

And he knew exactly how to make Isaac fall a little more in love with him every day. Isaac certainly considered the man’s behavior with Sergei to be far more important, but there was still the blush that rose in his cheeks whenever he thought about Jordan, the smile when he thought about all the man had done for them, and the heat in his lower stomach at the thought of the man naked.

Isaac wasn’t surprised that he was able to think about Jordan in a sexual manner, the man was, after all, his boyfriend, but he would certainly be amazed if anyone could have sexual relations with him, again. He would certainly try, but there would need to be...time.

He knew that Jordan would give it to him, though. There had been a time when he wouldn’t have been sure of that, but he knew, without a doubt, that Jordan would be willing to give him all the time he needed.

It didn’t make Isaac feel any better knowing that. He couldn’t bring himself to feel comfortable with the idea that some part of Liam would always be there, keeping him from achieving intimacy with Jordan.

“Papa!” Sergei shouted, running into the room, making Isaac jump. He was holding a tall glass of a purple, frothy beverage. “I brought you something.”

“I can see that. Thank you.” Isaac said, reaching out to take the glass from his son.

“Papa Jordan said he only used fruits from the list that the doctor gave you, but said that if you didn’t like it, he could make you something else.”

Isaac sipped the juice, a little wary from the warning, but nearly laughing when the sweet flavour burst out over his tongue.

“No, it’s good.” He said.

“Papa, does Jordan adopting me mean that we’re a real family?” Sergei asked while Isaac drank his juice.

“It does, son. And since we’re alone, are you really okay with that?” Isaac asked, looking at Sergei.

Sergei nodded, enthusiastically. “Yeah! I think he’s a great papa, and even though you’re my favorite, I’m really excited to have another papa.”

“Well, I’ll let you in on a little secret.” Isaac said, smiling at his son’s openness. “You’re my favorite, too.”

“I’m your *only* son, papa, I can’t be your favorite.”

“But you are. Of all the people and all the children in all the world, you are my absolute favorite.”

“Even more than Jordan?”

“I love Jordan a lot, but I love you much, much more.” Isaac said, honestly. “And you are without a doubt, my favorite.”

“We’ll always be best buddies, right, papa?” Sergei asked, his voice a little unsure.

“What do you mean, Seryozha? Of course we will. I’ll be better before school, and we’ll spend a lot of time together. You...understand why we weren’t hanging out as much, right?”

“The bad man made you want to hide.” Sergei said, it wasn’t a question, Isaac knew that even as young as he was, his son was too smart for that.

“That’s....Sergei, you’re...too young to be thinking about these things.”

“But we’re safe, right?” Sergei asked, as though his suspicions had been confirmed.

“We are, and like I said, we’ll go out soon, and do whatever you want to do.”

“We could play video games, and then we wouldn’t have to wait for you to get better.” Sergei said, with a sly smile.

Notes for the Chapter:

I meant to post this four days ago, but there was a problem with the site, it wasn't giving me the ability to paste my work into the box. Sorry about that.

Edit: Suffering with a terrible bout of bronchitis, will update when I can.

69. Downstairs

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac needs to ask Jordan something.

Isaac

Isaac certainly got an earful from Jordan about taking it upon himself to go downstairs to play with Sergei. Isaac could tell that Jordan was holding back his anger, and was grateful for the reprieve, but also felt as though he deserved to be yelled at. It had been a stupid idea, Isaac could feel the consequences burning in his damaged ribs, but it didn't feel like an emergency. Still, Isaac could see the fear in Jordan's eyes, and it made him feel terrible.

It wasn't a feeling as though he'd be hit or something worse, he trusted Jordan too much for that, but there was a noticeable feeling of failure that welled up in him, because he truly did care about Jordan and his feelings.

"Bed rest, babe, this isn't a bed." Jordan said, quietly.

"I...I just wanted to spend some time with him...after what happened." Isaac offered as explanation.

"I understand that, I really do, babe, but there's a limit to what your body can handle, right now."

Isaac understood that, and he could feel the tweak in his ribs from the injury that Liam had caused, but the need for him to spend time with Sergei had vastly outweighed any desire to keep his health in check.

The deepest scar that Liam had left in Isaac was not physical, and it wasn't even his post-traumatic stress disorder, it was his desire to spend as much time with Sergei as possible.

"I...I just wanted to spend time with him." Isaac explained.

"Why didn't you say so?" Jordan asked with a chuckle. "I just want you to stay in bed, but if you want to play games with Sergei, I'll bring the T.V. and one of

the consoles up.”

Isaac smiled at Jordan, the simple compromise more than enough to placate himself and Sergei who clapped excitedly at the idea. When Jordan moved to get up, though, Isaac reached out and took his hand.

“Are you mad?” He asked.

“Not mad, babe, I could never be mad at you for wanting to spend time with our son.” At those words, Jordan smiled, as though the new freedom to consider Sergei his son was very uplifting. “I just worry about you. I really don’t want this...Babe, I’m happier than I’ve ever been in my life by a large margin, and I don’t want anything to happen to you. You’re hurt, and the doctor said bed rest to keep you safe, not to be mean. You even agreed to it at the time.”

“I know.” Isaac said. “And I Wanted to, I just didn’t think the stairs would be that bad.”

“Are the stairs on the bed?” Jordan asked with a smirk and a raised eyebrow.

“No.” Isaac said with a chuckle.

Jordan made Isaac promise to remain in bed for the following few days, but brought up the game consoles that Sergei demanded, and joined them in a few games. Isaac found himself much more comfortable with Jordan in the bed with him, cuddled up against his chest, than he did in the game room.

“Much more comfortable.” Isaac said with a chuckle.

“And to think, all you ever have to do is ask, and you can have this whenever you want.” Jordan said, pressing a kiss to the side of his head.

“Well, we both have jobs waiting for us.”

“Not until you’re ready, you don’t, babe.”

Isaac wondered if he would ever be ready to face the world without Jordan, and the only way to ensure that he would be would be to try.

“It’s not like we can mooch off Stiles and Derek forever.”

“Sure, you can.” Derek said, poking his head into room.

“Okay, it’s really creepy how people manage to do that.” Isaac said with a glare, though the man’s presence had not frightened him, just made him question the timing of his friend.

“It’s a gift, a treasured gift.” Derek said with a grin. “And even though I’m sure that Stiles already told you, you are going to stay here for as long as you need to, and simply because I don’t trust your judgement on the matter, *I* will decided when you no longer need to stay here.” Derek said, coming into the room, not even looking at the moved video game console.

“The agreement was that I would stay until the semester started, and that’s when I’m working.” Isaac said, sounding far more confident than he felt.

“That was before...this.” Derek said, gesturing with his arm towards Isaac. “You’re going to take some time to recoup, or...and I’m not even kidding, I fear for the reprisals that Jordan will wrought upon all of us.”

“And reprisals there will be, too. Hell hath no fury like an exasperated deputy.” Jordan added.

“Papa, can you please stay and not get sick?” Sergei asked, crawling up next to him and burying his head into Isaac’s chest, which was something that he had a hard time arguing against.

“I promise, son, I’ll get better, but I’m actually still...pretty excited about teaching Russian to all those kids...which just makes me feel old.”

It wasn’t a lie. Isaac feared the world and the people in it, but the idea of teaching still made him feel happy. He was excited to impart his knowledge on the next generation, and knew that if he pushed himself hard enough, he would be able to do it. He wasn’t trying to become president or a neurosurgeon, but there was something about giving his culture to students that he felt was important.

It was the last, lingering remnants of his mother that he could keep alive, to help keep her alive. If she was still there, Isaac wouldn’t have wanted her to see what had happened to him, the horrors that Liam had subjected him to, but he did know, without a doubt, that she would be proud of him for teaching Russian.

“Ya obeshchayu byt' ostorozhnym, Seryozha. No nasha kul'tura yavlyayetsya vazhnym, i ya khochu podelit'sya im s lyud'mi , kak ya sdela s vami. (I promise to be careful, Seryozha. But our culture is important, and I want to share it with people.)” Isaac replied, adding gravitas to his words by using the very language he was concerned with preserving.

Sergei sighed in a put upon way that made Isaac sure that his son had been watching too much T.V.

“Papa, our language will be here, but if you’re not...Papa, I need you.” Sergei said, the words coming out thickly, causing Isaac to ignore the tightness in his chest as he crushed his son to it.

“Oh, son. I will be here for a long time, I promise. Don’t let the doctor worry you, I’m not going to die by going to teach.”

“But you went downstairs when you shouldn’t have, and you’re not being careful, papa!” Sergei shouted, his eyes filling with tears as he hugged Isaac.

Jordan and Derek both watched, though their silence told Isaac that they didn’t disagree.

“Okay, well your papa can be an idiot sometimes. I promise, I’ll only go if I really, *really* feel up to it, okay? I’ll be a lot more careful from now on, because you may be scared of losing me, but Sergei?”

Sergei looked up, his eyes bloodshot and wet, making Isaac’s heart tug painfully at the inadvertent pain that he had caused his son.

“I’m even more scared of losing you and Jordan and Derek and Stiles. You’re all far too important to me to go yet.”

“Promise?” Sergei asked.

“I promise, son.”

Isaac didn’t find it odd that Derek stayed with them, and found it even less odd that Stiles came to join them shortly after. Isaac was getting used to all of them being together, and felt that it was appropriate. There was a wound in his psyche that prevented him from even giving serious consideration to the idea of sex with

Jordan, and therefore he didn't need alone time, he didn't *want* it. There were so many things for him to enjoy, so many things that he had almost lost, and he wanted all of it.

That night, Jordan helped him shower, being extra precautions after the earlier incident, and carefully placed him in bed, before snuggling up next to him, and placing a kiss on Sergei's forehead.

"I love you both." He whispered. "So much."

"I love you, too, papa." Sergei said.

"And I love you, Jordan, so much, for...everything that you've done." Isaac replied, pressing his lips to Jordan's. Jordan allowed Isaac to move at his own pace, but Isaac heard a small moan, and it brought a smile to his lips. There was something very relaxing about the fact that he was still attractive, even if he wasn't ready to follow that lead.

"Papa, you're bumping me." Sergei said with a grumble that made Isaac let out a laugh, which Jordan joined him in.

"Sorry, kiddo, we were just...er." Jordan said, seemingly unsure of how to continue, though Sergei finished the sentence for him.

"Kiss in the morning, it's sleeping time, now."

"That's certainly an assertive son, you've got there." Jordan said, his voice a ghostly whisper.

"He gets that from his mother, I certainly never taught him to do that."

"No, it's you. I mean...I didn't know his mother, but...God, Isaac, you're so strong. You...you don't tell people that it's 'sleepy time', but you're an amazing man."

"If you keep complimenting me and telling me that I'm strong, I'm liable to believe it."

"Well, we can't have that. You can't actually *believe* anything that I tell you, that would ruin that whole point." Jordan said, sarcastically.

“Too late, I’m already feeling pretty good.”

“I know, I can see it in that blush on your cheeks, it’s very, very attractive.” Jordan said, licking it. Isaac jumped. It wasn’t fear, it was a tickle, and he immediately began laughing to make sure that Jordan didn’t worry for no reason.

“No fair!” Isaac said, his voice returning to normal. “You have a very...tickly tongue.”

“Rawr!” Sergei growled, jumping over Isaac, and landing on Jordan. He began tickling him aggressively, laughing manically.

“Wait, Sergei, wait!” Jordan shouted in between peals of laughter. Sergei stopped only long enough for Jordan to make sure that Isaac was okay, before continuing with a zeal that Isaac had not seen in a while.

Isaac couldn’t join in, but he didn’t mind. It was nice seeing the two of them wrestling, trying to gain the upper hand in the tickle fight that had been started.

Isaac had never exactly longed for Sergei to have a second parent, male or female. He regretted with deep sincerity the loss of Natalia, but he had raised Sergei on his own, and never felt as though he needed someone else there for them. It was one thing to find pleasure in having a man by his side, but there was a special joy in seeing Sergei playing with another father. It was something that he hadn’t even known that he was missing until it was there. Seeing Jordan play with Sergei, protect them, and care for them made Isaac sure that he had chosen the right path in life. Allowing Jordan into their lives was the best decision he could have ever made.

He wanted to marry Jordan, and make everything as legal as possible. It was something that was a mere dream up until that point, something that would fulfill a social need to for matrimony, but in that moment, it was something that he desired with his entire heart.

“Marry me?” He asked out into the darkness, causing Jordan and Sergei to both stop.

“What?” Jordan asked, panting, his eyes shining in the dim light of the lights from the consoles.

“I...it’s not how I wanted to ask...I actually never thought that I’d be the one asking, but...I have to be married to you, Jordan. I want you to be my husband, a father to Sergei, and I-.”

Jordan moved forward and kissed Isaac on the lips. “Yes, absolutely, Isaac Lahey, I will marry you.”

Notes for the Chapter:

Sorry, guys. Bronchitis and Papers due made it this whole thing, and that's why it took so long.

Thank you for being so patient!

70. Rings

Summary for the Chapter:

Jordan, Sergei, Stiles, and Isaac have breakfast.

Isaac

Jordan didn't seem to be bothered by the lack of decorum in Isaac's proposal. When Isaac awoke the next morning, he found Sergei curled up with a giant bag of Skittles and a bouquet of roses on his bedside table, their fragrance wafting down on him, and making him smile.

"I still swear that grin will be the death of me." Jordan's voice ghosted over his ear, widening Isaac's grin.

"No talk of death." Isaac mumbled, turning over to nuzzle himself into Jordan's chest. "Figurative or otherwise."

"I think I can accept that." Jordan said with a breathy chuckle that made goosebumps erupt over Isaac's body.

"Did you...I mean, I don't mind...entirely, if you did, but did you leave?" Isaac asked, curious about the complete lack of nightmares while Jordan had been away.

"I did not, I got up for a moment, but only to ask Stiles to get these for me. I said I wouldn't leave you and I meant it."

"I fear that you'll grow tired of me before too long, maybe even before we get married."

Jordan erupted with a boisterous laugh that shook the mattress. "You silly man. Do you really think that I could ever be tired of you? I certainly didn't agree to marry you out of an obligation."

A few simple words was all it took for Isaac to be transported back to the bliss of his dreams. Jordan had agreed to marry him. Everything had been laid out on the table, and if the man had so decided, he could have left Isaac without any

explanation, and Isaac would have understood. Jordan had accepted him with hardly any hesitation, though.

“So, it wasn’t all in my dreams, you really are going to marry me?” Isaac asked with a grin.

“Oh, you bet, babe. Though, it is sweet to know that I’m in your dreams, too, because you are certainly the man of mine.”

Isaac’s face ignited in a blush as Jordan’s words hit him. There was no doubt in his mind that he was loved.

“Don’t waste all of your kind words on me before we’re even married, you need something for the vows.”

Jordan chuckled. “But, don’t you see? You are the thing that poets write about, that artists paint. You are my beautiful, perfect man, and as long as there are kind words, I could never run out of any for you.”

“Papa, when you’re done flirting, can we go and have breakfast.”

Isaac laughed. The very thought of Sergei thinking that he and Jordan were still in the ‘flirting’ phase was humorous to him.

“Sergei, Jordan and I are engaged, which means that we’re not just flirting, we’re simply being sweet to each other.”

Sergei cocked his head as he shoved several more candies into his mouth, making Isaac reach out, and take the bag from him.

“But, I’ll let you call it whatever you want when we get some real food into you. This is not a suitable breakfast.”

“I’m sorry, I just...I was so happy, I told Stiles to grab the biggest bag.” Jordan quickly explained.

“It’s no bother, I’m rather happy myself, I just really think that we should have some good food in us.”

“When you’re my papa’s husband, will you still bring me Skittles?” Sergei asked

as they got up from the bed. Isaac took the roses with him, intending to put them in some water.

“I will...son” Jordan promised, a little awkwardly.

“And papa can make breakfast, and you can go to work, and then we can all play video games.” Sergei continued, his life seemingly not interrupted by the shift that Isaac saw as so drastic. To him, marriage was a big step, with a note of finality that meant more to him than he could say. To Sergei, though, it seemed like it was merely a small step that bonded them closer together. His young mind couldn’t grasp what marriage meant, and in a way, it made it all the sweeter for Isaac. That Sergei could view it in such simple terms relieved some of the tension he knew that he should be feeling.

“Something like that. Don’t forget, you have school coming up.”

“But if papa’s still sick, I can stay home, right?”

Isaac felt his heart drop. If it were up to him, they would never be parted, but he knew the world continued to turn no matter what he had experienced.

Jordan offered him his arm and kept a close eye on him while the descended. Isaac took each step carefully and deliberately.

“No, Sergei. I’m getting better, and you have to go to school, it’s very important.”

“Well, if you’re going to teach, and Jordan is going to protect people, you could teach at my school, and Jordan could protect it.”

Jordan let out a heavy sigh. “In a perfect world, kiddo. I have a lot of people to protect, though. Can you understand why I can’t be there?”

Sergei seemed to think about it for a moment, before he nodded. “Because that would be selfish?”

“No.” Jordan said, quickly, seeming to be unable to use a pejorative term for Sergei. “No, that makes you human, but other people might want to see me, too. Is that alright?”

“If you’re protecting other people, and you promise to keep my papa safe.”

“I do, Sergei, I swear.”

“And for me, I have to teach the grownups Russian, you can help the kids your age learn.”

Sergei looked a little down at the information, but nodded when they reached the bottom of the stairs. “Would I be a baby if I didn’t like it, though?”

“If you are, then I am, as well. I really wish that I could go with you, Sergei.”

“And we’ll be together when I get home, right?”

“Absolutely.” Jordan said. “And after your homework, we can do whatever you want. I’m sure your papa will miss you all the more after a day at work.”

“Of course.” Isaac said, enjoying the way Jordan had taken the question.

“So...here’s a question: Why are down here?” Stiles asked when they got to the kitchen.

“Jordan helped me.” Isaac said, quickly. “I was careful.”

Stiles nodded and moved to the fridge, pulling out some eggs and a packet of bacon. “In that case, what does everyone say to some breakfast?”

“That sounds perfect.” Isaac said, getting up into one of the stools with Jordan’s help.

“I still can’t believe you guys are getting married, we have so much to do.” Stiles said, displaying his knowledge of the fact, leaving Isaac to assume that Jordan had told him.

“Oh, are joining in holy matrimony to you as well?” Isaac asked as Stiles threw some bacon into a pan.

“Oh, ha ha! Seriously, do you know what it took to get Derek and I married? There’s so much to do, and you two haven’t even gotten your engagement rings, yet.”

“That’s because I can’t leave the house, and I was being spontaneous.” Isaac argued. “It was supposed to be romantic and cute.”

“It was romantic and cute, in fact, it was adorable.” Jordan said, kissing the side of his head. “Besides, Stiles, it’s not as though anyone is going to see my ringless finger for a little while, we can pick these things out later.”

“What about a date?”

“I’m leaving that entirely in the hands of my beloved fiancé.” Jordan said. “Whatever he wants.”

“I always liked the idea of a winter wedding.” Isaac said, blushing at Jordan’s offer. “There’s something about snow that makes everything more romantic.”

“I can definitely get behind that.” Jordan replied, enthusiastically. “See, Stiles, we can work these things out.”

“I had no doubts, I just didn’t want things to sneak up on you. I can tell that you two are going to go very well together.”

Stiles served them all a hearty breakfast of eggs, bacon, and toast. He continued to offer suggestions while they ate, though Isaac found most of the passing through his head without leaving much of an impression. For one thing, he fully intended to utilize Stiles’ experience in planning the wedding, and for another, he couldn’t help but stare at Jordan, letting their eyes lock as he ate. Even in the simple act of eating, Jordan was beautiful, and Isaac kept waiting for something to happen, for Jordan to suddenly gain eyesight or clarity and run away from him.

Jordan didn’t, though, he smiled at Isaac, and winked at him every few minutes, reinforcing Isaac’s belief that he had made the right decision in a husband and second father for his son.

“If you’re feeling well enough to come downstairs, I was wondering if I could invite the dean over on Sunday, so that we could set up your interview for your job, if you’re feeling up to it.” Stiles said. “If you’re not, then there’s no need to rush, I mean-.”

“That sounds great. I really do want to do it. I just...” Isaac reached out and took

Jordan's hand. "I hope that he doesn't change his mind when he sees how... different I am."

"He's not a monster, Isaac. You're a little shaken after a series of shaking events, everyone understands. He's still excited to have you work there, as long as you're healed enough. He knows that you just got through something hard."

Isaac nodded, hoping that he could get the job because he deserved it, not because Dean Harris pitied him.

"Are you really alright with him coming over on Sunday?" Jordan asked. "Because if you're not-."

"I am." Isaac said, quickly.

Stiles seemed to grasp the point Jordan had been trying to reach. "I'm not moving too fast, am I? Man, you can stay here for the next twenty years-."

"Maybe." Isaac said. "But, I'd never forgive myself if I didn't at least try."

"And speaking of homes, Jordan, can we talk about something?" Stiles asked, pointing to the living room. Isaac was curious as to what was so private, but noticed that Stiles' eyes kept drifting to Sergei, so he assumed that it wasn't for his sake, but rather his son's.

"Babe?" Jordan asked, checking with Isaac before moving.

"I'm sitting down, I'll be fine." Isaac said, not at all bothered that Jordan was worried about him.

"I love you." Jordan said, kissing the side of his head, before following Isaac into the room.

"Papa, when you marry Jordan, will I be there?"

Isaac laughed. "Of course, son. You're going to be my ring bearer."

"What's that?" Sergei asked, his eyes lighting up with excitement at the prospect.

Isaac chuckled. “It means that you’re going to bring the rings for us, so that we can give them to each other.”

“Why do you have to give rings?”

“Because that’s the way that society works, son. People give each other rings when they get married.”

“Do sons get rings?”

Isaac laughed. “No, but they get almost anything else that they want.”

“Can I have a tuxedo and a hug?” Sergei asked, making Isaac chuckle. He reached out and took Sergei’s hand.

“Of course you can, Seryozha.”

Jordan and Stiles came back, both looking smug. Isaac wanted to ask, but knew that they would be secretive with Sergei still in the room. He doubted that anything that made them happy could be bad for him, though.

Notes for the Chapter:

Thank you for all the well wishes, I really appreciate it.

71. Curse

Summary for the Chapter:

Harris comes to dinner

Isaac

Isaac was thoroughly surprised with himself when the time came for Sunday's dinner. There was a simmering fear within him, a need to keep Sergei close, but when Scott and Allison came through the door, he was able to give a genuine smile. There was a logic that overcame his body's defensive nature, a knowledge that his friends wouldn't harm him, because he knew that they never would. He hugged Scott and Allison both, before returning to his spot on the couch, safe and warm in Jordan's arms.

"So, I hear congratulations are in order." Scott said with a wide grin.

Jordan's grip tightened in an affection manner, while Isaac nodded.

"Yeah, we're in engaged. No rings, yet, but that's just superfluous at this point."

"That's great, man."

"It wasn't as romantic as yours." Isaac said, shrugging his shoulders.

"But you're as romantic as us, and that's what matters." Scott said, taking Allison's hand. "Who asked who, when, how, and where...None of that matters, what matters is why, and one only need look at you two for a moment to realize that you two are going to be great together."

Isaac took Scott's words deep in his heart. It was a reiteration of what he already knew to be true, but seeing that others could see it as well was heartening.

"So, do you have a date set, yet?" Allison asked, sitting across from them on the loveseat.

"We haven't talked about all of that." Jordan said. "For now, it is enough that we are engaged. At least, it is for me."

“For me, too.” Isaac said, quickly. He was certainly at peace with the idea of merely being the fiancé of Jordan, and would be for a time to come.

“Well, we can help with the planning, if you’re willing. Setting up for ours has put in contact with the best people.” Allison said, accepting a hug from Sergei.

Sergei moved to Scott and offered him a hug as well, while Jordan and Isaac both nodded.

“Help would be great, as I don’t see Isaac fancying a redneck’s wedding.”

“And due to my...time in Chicago, I would underspend on everything until we were just betrothed by Stiles in the living room.”

“Which is *not* happening!” Stiles called from his bedroom. “If you two don’t make the cutest gay wedding since me and Derek, I will flay you!”

Isaac chuckled, but Sergei wrinkled his nose. “Papa, kak skazat po-Ruskie, ‘flay’? (Papa, what does flay mean in Russian?)”

“Thanks, Stiles!” Isaac called to him, while he pulled Sergei onto his lap with a disapproving look from Jordan, though the deputy did voice his concerns.

“It means...Dyadya Stiles zhestok (Uncle Stiles is mean).” Isaac whispered.

“I heard that.” Stiles said, coming out of the room, but before Isaac could respond, Jordan spoke.

“I understood all of that, babe. Except for the word...zhestork?” He faltered, but considering that Jordan had understood the rest of the short conversation, Isaac was very proud of him.

“Zhestok, vydrachka, and you did great. It means cruel or mean.”

Jordan repeated the word under his breath a few times, until there was another knock at the door, and Stiles moved to let them in.

All in all, Isaac was fine, until Dean Harris arrived. Seeing as most of his friends had spent more than a considerable amount of time with him in the hospital, it was logical that Jackson, Allison, Lydia, and Scott could be near him, but Isaac

had allowed himself to believe that all would be alright. Seeing another man, someone who was far more unfamiliar made his gut prickle uncomfortably.

Isaac quickly assessed the situation as well as he could. He felt fear and anxiety, but knew that he could not act on it. Any sign of discomfort or suspicion by himself would lead to a negative response from both Sergei and Jordan, and he didn't want his chances for the job to dry up any more than he perceived them to be.

"Isaac, how are you?" Harris asked, choosing to wave, instead of extend his hand, which Isaac was grateful for.

"I'm...healing." Isaac said, carefully, trying to convey in no words that he was feeling cautious.

"I'd like to make it clear that while I am the dean, you are in charge here. I understand very shallowly what happened to you, and want you to make sure that your comfort and health are prioritized. If you feel uncomfortable at any point, just ask Stiles to tell me to leave, and I will do so."

Isaac was surprised and grateful that Harris had made such a request right away. It wasn't as though he had a preconceived notion that the man was going to be coarse with him, quite the contrary, but he still had not expected that Harris would take such a position.

"I...I...thank you." Isaac finally managed to whisper.

"You're welcome, Isaac. We're a community college, not some highly populated university. We're a family, and though I want you in it, I won't do so if it will adversely affect your health."

"I...I think that I'm doing better." Isaac said, hating that he stuttered twice in a row.

"My papa is a good man, he's not sick." Sergei added.

"I believe that, young man. I just want to make sure he stays well, I'm not trying to be mean."

"Sergei's very protective." Isaac explained with a bashful smile.

“I remember, but the change to English is much appreciated. I can’t imagine not wanting to protect one’s father if he’s as kind as you.”

Isaac noticed that Jordan tightened his grip slightly at these words in a rather adorable display of jealousy. Isaac thought that Harris was just being kind, but Jordan apparently saw a threat to his position, which Isaac found ridiculous. There was no one else for him as far as he was concerned. Jordan was everything that he wanted in a lover, husband, and father.

“I’m not leaving.” He whispered into Jordan’s ear.

“So, I’m very willing to hire you, Isaac, but we’re going to have to keep an open dialogue. Stiles told me that you can be stubborn, and I’m not going to have you hurting yourself.”

“I’m f...fine, though.” Isaac said, trying to feel brave in what he was quickly understand was the interview.

“We’re just looking after you, man.” Jackson said. “We’re all worried about you.”

“You’re from here, we’re trying to make sure that you’re alright.” Lydia added, making Isaac feel as though he had been left out of a meeting about his future.

“I...” Isaac let out a sigh. “I’m fine, though. I just need a few more weeks to recuperate.”

“Which you have. And I know it seems like we’re ganging up on you-.” Harris began.

“A little.” Isaac said with a nervous chuckle.

“But, I’m just trying to make sure that you don’t push yourself. I’d blame myself if something happened.”

“Does...Does that mean that I can get the job?” Isaac asked a little hopefully.

“You can’t celebrate, but yes, Isaac, of course you do.” Harris said with a chuckle.

The rest of the group certainly celebrated for Isaac. Stiles whooped and high-fived Derek, while Allison and Scott hugged, and Jackson did a little jig. Isaac was feeling an odd sense of euphoria. He let out a strangled laugh, the moment hardly seeming real. He had expected suits, ties, and long conversations, not to be accepted on the mere whim of Harris.

“Are you serious?”

“Isaac, I was going to hire you from the moment Stiles came to me, I’m just making sure that you were up for it after everything that happened.”

“Then...why...?”

“Because I can’t show favoritism, but considering the choices of Russian speakers are scant.”

Isaac gave Jordan a wary look, but he was still smiling. Isaac had never had the feeling of being *useful*, before. His work history had been completely based on his needs, and had never been for pleasure, but so many things in his life had changed for the better, that he could only smile.

“Congratulations, babe.” Jordan whispered in his ear, kissing his cheek.

“Thank you.”

“Papa, you did it!” Sergei shouted, hugging him around his legs.

“Yeah, he did.” Harris said, holding out his hand, again. “Congratulations, professor.”

Isaac blanched as he took the offered hand. “Thank you.” He repeated. He was a professor, something that he had once had pipe dreams about. He had a fiancé, a great job, and a son, and in that moment, he felt content and complete.

Isaac didn’t even feel the first tears slip past his eyes until Jordan made a concerned noise, and pulled him closer.

“I’m alright...just...fuck.” He whispered, realizing too late that he had cussed. Sergei gasped, making everyone burst out laughing.

“Papa, that’s a bad word.”

“I know, son, but...this is a big moment.” Isaac reasoned.

“Does that mean I can say fuck, too?” Sergei asked, excitedly, and Isaac really had no choice but to let it go, especially since Harris seemed to find it funny.

“Only that once.” Isaac said, unable to stop smiling.

There was nothing that could ruin the feeling of joy that he had. Everything had become what he had dreamed about during the cold nights in Chicago, while he made instant noodles for his son. He was established in a way that hadn’t been possible before. There was security in his life for the first time since he had first left for college. A final fetter in his heart that he hadn’t even known existed was lifted in that moment. Isaac was finally free.

Notes for the Chapter:

Fun fact: Bronchitis and kidney stones? Not fun times. There's also finals week that I have to take into account, so I really apologize for the shortness.

Side question: Am I allowed to link to outside sources on here? I started a political blog that I'm really excited to share with people.

Thank you for the support and lack of mobs!

72. Two rings.

Summary for the Chapter:

Lunch Date

Isaac

Isaac sat in the doctor's office, waiting for Deaton to come back from running a few tests. Jordan was showing Sergei how to play a game on his phone, and Stiles and Derek were sitting next to them, interlacing their fingers together. Isaac felt a little uncomfortable being back in a doctor's office, but his family's presence kept him calm.

Isaac was hoping that Deaton would give him permission to go out. He wanted to spend time with Jordan and his son before the school year started, and knew that his fiancé would never allow it unless he was cleared to by Deaton.

"Papa, I survived another night!" Sergei shouted, happily.

"What are you playing?" Isaac asked with a chuckle.

"Five Nights at Freddy's." Sergei replied, sheepishly. Isaac was aware of the game, and under normal circumstances, would never let his son play it, but he wasn't feeling in the mood to spoil the smile on Sergei's face.

"Is that bad?" Jordan asked, and Isaac shook his head, but Deaton came back in before he respond.

"Is my papa better, yet?" Sergei asked, handing the phone back to Jordan.

"He's certainly doing better, and I bet that's because you and your family have been taking really good care of him, right?"

Sergei nodded, and Isaac caught Jordan smiling, too.

"You're still not one-hundred percent, Isaac, but you are doing better." Deaton said, turning to Isaac. "Your ribs are healing, and I can't see that it would be too bad to get in a little light exercise, but I need you to be careful."

“I don’t have to be careful, Jordan will make sure that I don’t hurt myself. I...I’ll probably be really close to him, anyway.”

“There’s nothing wrong with someone in your position needing someone to lean on.” Stiles said. “Figuratively or literally.” He added, turning his eye to Deaton, as though daring him to disagree.

“No, you should. From what I’ve been able to gather, you’re more likely to get eaten by a shark than get hurt with Jordan around.”

“Papa’s going to be eaten by a shark?” Sergei asked, sounding terrified, and making Isaac reach out to pull him into his lap.

“No, son, I’m not going to get eaten by a shark, that’s just...he’s trying to say that it’s unlikely that either will happen.”

“That’s a stupid way of saying it.” Sergei said, bluntly, glaring at Deaton, who laughed.

“I suppose it is, but the point, is that your father is going to be just fine, I promise.”

Jordan was still chuckling about Sergei’s bluntness an hour later as they walked along a chain of shops, hand in hand with Sergei who was between them. It was better than Isaac could have imagined. There were a few people out, but Isaac only flinched once or twice, and Jordan was there, each time, warm and comforting.

There was no particular location in mind, it was enough that they were together, the three of them. Isaac would have been even more happy with Stiles and Derek joining them, but they had decided to go home and enjoy the empty house. It had taken a full ten minutes to explain to Sergei why his dyadi didn’t want to go with them.

“I could eat, how about you two?” Jordan asked, pulling them to a stop in front of a restaurant. Isaac looked inside, and, noticing the rather posh interior, turned back to his fiancé with a raised eyebrow.

“I’m not dressed for that, let’s just go to a burger place or something.”

“I...I really want to try here, though. What could it hurt?” He asked with a small smile.

“I’m telling you, they’re going to kick us out.” Isaac said with a sigh, letting Jordan lead him into the restaurant.

The building was mahogany and crystal, everything shining with an extravagance that Isaac had not been accustomed to after his meager life. There was a troupe of waiters and waitresses in black tie, scurrying about, handing fancy, little foods to men and women dressed to the nines. Isaac felt a few eyes on him and Sergei, and felt his defenses go up at the attention.

“Bathrooms are for customers only.”

Isaac sighed and turned to Jordan intending to tell the man that he had predicted the cold reaction, but Jordan was already moving forward.

They whispered for a few moments, before the host’s eyes went wide, and he pulled some menus from beneath his podium.

“Of course, deputy, I’m sorry. If you and your family would please follow me?”

Jordan returned to Isaac’s side with a smug grin on his handsome face as he took Isaac’s hand.

“Shall we?” He asked, leading him into the restaurant.

Isaac kept Sergei close to himself as he wrapped his arm around Jordan’s, starting to feel as though he was being set up. Jordan seemed to be taking him out a surprise date. The thought that Jordan had somehow managed to convince a nice restaurant to let him in when he was dressed in casual clothing was sweet, but not as much as when the smug grin stayed on Jordan’s face as they walked, as though he was making sure that everyone knew how proud he was that they were together.

Isaac’s suspicions were confirmed when they reached a table with three chairs and a vase of white roses sitting on it.

“Jordan...” Isaac began, but Jordan merely chuckled and pulled out his chair.

“I’ve been wanting to take you out on a real date for a while, now, don’t take this away?” He begged softly, which was something that Isaac had never been prepared to deny.

“I’ll go with it, but only because I’m so impressed that you managed to do this all without me knowing.”

“I’m a man of many mysteries, and I can’t wait to share them all with you.” Jordan said, making Isaac chuckle. The man was so cheesy, and yet, Isaac found it one of his most enduring qualities. There was also something that he found incredibly romantic about the fact that Jordan had included Sergei without even asking. He knew that for normal parents, there were times that they went out on their own without their kids, but Jordan had not reached that point, yet. He settled Sergei into his seat, and handed him a napkin.

“Papa, this is a fancy place.”

“I know.” Isaac said. “Jordan is being very kind to us.”

“As if you two deserve anything less.” Jordan said with a scoff. “Sergei, I want you to know that you can order anything that you want, but it’s up to your papa if you can have soda.”

“But you’re my papa, too.” Sergei argued. Before Jordan could argue his son’s point, Isaac nodded.

“You are.” He said. “Can Sergei have soda?”

Jordan looked touched for a moment, before leaning across the table and pecking Isaac on the cheek. “Of course he can.”

Isaac understood that Jordan was still acclimating and reaching out his courage and trust to see what Isaac would allow or forbid, and was willing to let his fiancé work at his own pace, but couldn’t picture a situation in which he would contradict Jordan.

Their lunch was good, though Isaac really could have been eating anything with Jordan passing him coy smiles, bites of fish, and winks.

“This is really amazing, Jordan. Thank you for taking us out.” Isaac said when

the server came to clear their plates away.

“Well, I have to admit, I have something of an ulterior motive for bringing you here.”

Isaac’s heart didn’t drop, but it did stumble for a moment. He knew that Jordan wouldn’t be breaking up with him, or telling him that he couldn’t raise a son, it contradicted the entire mood of the meal, but he did worry that Jordan was about to ask them to move to another city with him, or even that his shifts were changing at the station.

“Babe, breathe, you’re turning colors. It’s not bad, I promise.”

The small vow was all that Isaac needed to calm himself. He reached across the table and took Jordan’s hand, letting out a breath when Jordan squeezed it reassuringly.

“You see, I found your candor and honesty with me when you asked me to marry you to be the paragon of the qualities that you possess. There was no fanfare, no beating around the bush. You decided that you wanted to be mine and that you wanted me to be yours, and I find that beautiful.” Jordan explained while Isaac listened patiently.

Jordan sighed. “For me, though, I want just a little more, and that’s why I wanted to ask you to indulge me by letting me put a ring on your finger, Isaac. As a symbol for everything that we are and everything that we’re going to be...” Jordan reached into his pocket and pulled out a small, black, velvet box. “May I please have the honor?”

Isaac felt his throat tighten as he nodded, touched by way that Jordan’s voice has cracked the barest amount during his speech. It had been something that he had been looking forward to, buying rings with Jordan, but he found it so much more romantic that Jordan was giving them a proper engagement. There would always be the wedding rings that they could pick out together.

Jordan didn’t spare any ceremony. He stood up and knelt beside Isaac, who had a few tears leaking from his eyes, even though he was aware that many people in the restaurant were watching them.

“Isaac, I agreed to be your husband, something that I don’t ever want to change,

and as a symbol of that longevity, I am asking that you, in return, agree to be my husband, as well.” Jordan said, opening the box.

Isaac’s tears made the glint of white gold blur in his eyes as he looked down at the sapphire encrusted band that Jordan was presenting him. He knew that it had probably cost the GDP of a small country, but had no mind to object. It was beautiful, and as Jordan reached in to place it on Isaac’s finger, he felt his breath hitch.

“Yes, vydrachka, I will absolutely marry you.” Isaac sobbed, falling forward into Jordan’s waiting arms, while the restaurant exploded into thunderous applause, startling Isaac for a moment.

“Thank you, babe.” Jordan whispered. “I love you, so much.”

“I love you, too.” Isaac replied, his voice still thick with his tears.

Isaac felt clichéd in doing so, but he couldn’t help but admire the new ring on his finger, letting the light catch the dark blue stone to his delight, before Sergei pulled at his arm, trying to get a better look.

“Ochen Krassivy, papa. (Very pretty)” He said in an awed voice.

“I needed something that could compare with your father.” Jordan said. “I thought that the blue would bring out your eyes.”

“I still want a ring, papi.” Sergei said, addressing them both.

“The kid wants a ring...we should get him one.” Jordan said, reaching into his back pocket, and producing a second velvet box, this one longer, suggesting that it wasn’t just a ring.

“Sergei Isaacovich Lahey, will you allow me the honor of marrying your papa?” Jordan asked.

Sergei clapped his hands, and nodded, accepting the box with a joyful smile.

Inside, Isaac saw a silver chain-link bracelet.

“It’s not like your papa’s, but it’s a type of ring, this one goes around your

wrist.” Jordan explained, reaching down to help Sergei put it on.

Notes for the Chapter:

What;s this? A properly lengthed chapter? It's a sign of the apocalypse!

73. Trying

Summary for the Chapter:

Smut warning!

Isaac

Isaac stared up at the sky while Sergei tried to find shapes in the clouds, calling them out in Russian for Jordan to translate. The day was warm and the grass they were laying on was radiating the sun's heat, making Isaac feel relaxed and comfortable.

"Korova!" Sergei cried, pointing to a particularly fluffy cloud.

"Cow?" Jordan guessed.

"Da." Sergei replied, clapping his hands while Jordan fist pumped in victory.

"Del' fin."

"Uh...dolphin?"

"Yeah, but that's cheating, because it sounds so similar." Isaac chided with a grin.

"How about 'nosorog', papa?" Sergei asked with a playful grin.

"Did you think that I'd forget our trip to the zoo, and you learning the word rhinoceros for the first time?" Jordan asked, returning the smile.

"Okay, but now, I see a 'medved'." Sergei challenged, making Jordan scratch his chin.

"Okay, you got me, you little stinker." He said, rolling over to tickle Sergei, whose peals of laughter filled the park where they were laying. Isaac was at ease just watching. Though he normally would have liked to join in on the fun, he had made a promise not to get too physical in order to keep his health in a well enough condition for him to enjoy outings like the one that he was on.

“Pomogite mne, papa! Pomogite mne! (Help me, papa! Help me!)” Sergei squealed through his laughter.

“Sergei, you know that I can’t wrestle right now.” Isaac said, his tone a little sad.

“Tell him...tell him the answer so he stops.” Sergei said, seemingly desperate to include his father.

“I’ll give him a hint.” Isaac said with a chuckle. “It’s the national animal of Russia.”

“Wait, why do I have to guess?” Jordan said, halting his movements. “I’m the one with the upper ground.”

“Because that’s the rules of the game.” Isaac said, shrugging with a grin.

“Hmmm, alright, well, it sounds like a bear to me.” Jordan said, rolling on his back.

They continued in that manner for a little while, teaching Jordan new words while occasionally taking a small break so that Jordan could tickle or chase Sergei. Isaac enjoyed watching them bond, though the feeling fell second to enjoying it in a public park. There was something about the location that made it special. Though he knew it had only been a matter of weeks, it felt like years since he had been able to enjoy a simple day in the sun.

“I think that we should discuss alternatives to traditional honeymoons.” Jordan said, plopping himself down next to Isaac in the grass while Sergei continued to run in circles around them. He didn’t stray more than a few yards, a choice he seemingly made on his own, but Isaac’s eyes never left him.

“What do you mean?”

“Well, we’ve cultivated something of a unique dynamic, and I like to think that I know you pretty well.”

Isaac nodded while his eyes traced Sergei’s path. “Probably better than anyone else.”

“Well, would I be right in assuming that you don’t want to just leave Sergei

behind while we go to Tuscany or on a cruise?”

“I wouldn’t find that to be a particularly pleasant option.” Isaac admitted, his brow furrowing. He hadn’t even given any thought to a honeymoon, merely the elation at the idea of being united with Jordan and giving Sergei a second parent. A small part of him was willing to compromise with Jordan if the man was dead set with Sergei staying with Stiles and Derek. Isaac trusted them, after all, but if there was a way for the three of them to be together, he would definitely prefer it.

“So, I was thinking, maybe we could go on a family cruise or to Disneyland or something like that.”

It was another case of Jordan trying to make sure that not only was Isaac comfortable, but that they were truly a family. Ever careful of his injury, Isaac rolled himself closer to Jordan, and pressed their lips together. Jordan made a halting mewling sound as though he wanted to moan, but not too loudly, and wrapped an arm around him.

“Papa, that’s gross!” Sergei whined, throwing himself on the ground next to them.

“You won’t be saying that when you get older.” Jordan said, entwining his hand with Isaac’s.

“I’m never going to kiss someone like that. If I get married it won’t be with a kisser.” Sergei retorted, crossing his arms.

“A relationship without kisses...” Jordan pondered. “I suppose that if anyone could do it, it would be you.”

“Really?” Sergei asked.

“I have no doubt that you can do anything you put your mind to, Seryozha.” Jordan said with a nod. “You get that from your father.”

The compliment made Isaac blush, and kiss Jordan’s hand, but Sergei had an adjustment:

“Both my papas are good.”

“Yeah, good at looking sexy in a uniform.” Jordan said, patting his flat stomach with a wink.

Isaac couldn't help but smile and agree. He rolled over and pressed himself against Jordan, while leaving room for Sergei to join them.

“You know that you have more going for you than just your body.” Isaac consoled.

“Papa, you can't fall asleep out here, we have to go home to eat.”

“Are you hungry, buddy?” Isaac asked while Jordan sat up and dug around in his pockets.

“A little bit.” Sergei admitted.

Jordan fished out a pack of Skittles and handed them to their son, before getting to his feet. “These should hold you over until we can get you something more substantial.” He said with a grin as he reached out a hand to help Isaac up.

“Thank you, papa.” Sergei said, tearing into the bag.

In a move that both surprised and delighted Isaac, Sergei took to his own bed that evening. He wondered whether his son understood more than he let on.

“He's certainly bright.” Jordan said as he crawled into the bed next to Isaac.

“Yeah, but...he's in bed, and while I appreciate how much you care for him, we should focus on something else, tonight.” Isaac replied, taking a deep breath to steady himself. He didn't have a roadmap, he wasn't exactly sure what would happen, but he knew that he wanted Jordan to touch him, and he also knew that the chances of them being alone again in the near future were scant.

“And...what would you like to focus on, babe?” Jordan asked, sounding completely nonplussed, which Isaac figured was his own fault. His abhorrence of any sexual contact had kept Jordan in a place where flirting didn't seem to mean much.

Taking a chance at being provocative, Isaac took Jordan's hand, and placed it on his crotch.

“Maybe this?” He suggested.

Jordan’s eyes widened and his tongue darted out to wet his lips. “Are...are you sure?”

“No, but...I trust you, Jordan. I love you, and I want...I want to try something... anything to be closer to you.”

“Well, if you’re sure, there’s something that we could try that might not cause your anxiety to flare up.”

“And what’s that?” Isaac asked, truly eager to be intimate with Jordan.

“Close your eyes, babe.” Jordan whispered with a warming grin. “And if there’s anything that you don’t like, anything at all, say the word ‘Skelington’.

“That’s...that’s kind of a nerdy safe word.” Isaac said as he obeyed, closing his eyes, trusting his body to Jordan.

“I’m kind of a really nerdy fiancé.” Jordan’s voice said as the warmth from his breath slid over Isaac’s stomach make him shiver pleasantly.

“I said that I was happy to wait until you were ready, babe, and I am, but I won’t lie, I’ve dreamt about tasting you.” Jordan whispered, before he did just that. His tongue lightly began to trace small patterns on Isaac’s chest, leading ever closer to his nipple.

Isaac was panting, almost immediately. There was the ever present fear within his mind, but it was weakly beating against his skull, as opposed to the pleasure he was awash in, which was dragging his body through a world he had rarely experienced.

“I’ve wanted to see your squirm and writhe in pleasure under me.” Jordan continued, taking a moment to suckle on his nipple a little. “I’ve wanted to see you enjoy your body.”

Isaac reached down to run his hand over Jordan’s head, allowing himself to feel a small amount of dominance, a luxury in life up until that point.

“Enjoy yourself, babe, show me where you want me to pleasure you.” Jordan

urged him.

Sure of himself, only by Jordan's words, Isaac pressed lightly on his head to make his fiancé's mouth go lower. Jordan complied, but with kisses each inch the he moved. The man's soft lips sending sparks through Isaac's body as they trailed lower.

"That feels amazing, Jordan." Isaac panted.

"You haven't felt anything, yet." Jordan replied while he helped Isaac wiggle out of his boxers.

Isaac knew what was coming, but nothing truly could have prepared him for how it felt when Jordan swallowed his entire length in one go. A ragged moan made its way out of Isaac's throat as wet warmth surrounded him. Isaac felt his fingers tighten around the side of Jordan's head as he began moving his hips without being fully in control of his actions. It had been too long since he had felt as good as he did in the moment.

Jordan's head bobbed up and down, his mouth providing sweet suction as Isaac flailed on the bed. He didn't exactly have the experience to be a good judge, but he did know when he was receiving good head, and Jordan certainly knew how to provide.

Isaac's moans became deeper as he quickly approached orgasm. It was a shameful thing in his estimation, that he could barely survive thirty seconds in Jordan's mouth, but he was also willing to bet all of his future happiness that Jordan wouldn't complain.

As if reading his mind, Jordan pulled himself up, and looked at Isaac, a grin playing across his face.

"Don't worry about stamina or endurance, babe. Worry about what feels good, and if it feels good, then let it happen, okay?"

Isaac nodded, his breath coming out in sharp gasps as he nearly begged to feel Jordan's throat on his tool, again.

Jordan seemed only too happy to comply, lowering himself once again, and continuing his ministrations.

“Fuck, vydrachka, that feels so good.”

Taking his words as a correct sign that he was near orgasm, Jordan quickened his pace, the slurping sounds emanating from him actually adding to the atmosphere.

“Please, Jordan....fucking, please.” Isaac panted, as he felt the coil within him tightening.

When his orgasm started, there was little warning. Isaac felt his eyes roll up and his back arch as Jordan moaned, egging him on. He didn’t feel as though he was ejaculating, but rather, coming undone at the seams, his entire body unstitching as he shot into Jordan’s mouth.

Notes for the Chapter:

I really think that my sex scenes are terrible.

74. Sandbox

Summary for the Chapter:

A trip to school

Isaac

“It’s bigger than I expected.” Isaac said, looking up at the two story elementary school. It was an imposing brick and glass building, that drew Isaac back to his own childhood, and the dark memories that he held of that time.

“Yeah, I didn’t think that we had that many young kids.” Jordan said, taking Sergei’s hand as they began to cross the parking lot.

Sergei himself seemed more than a little nervous for their visit to his future school, his tiny fingers clenched tight in Jordan’s hand, and he kept his eyes on Isaac, as though ensuring that he wouldn’t run off.

It had been Isaac’s own idea, to visit the school. He wanted Sergei to be acclimated to the building from a place of comfort before he was forced to go on his own. Isaac had already made an agreement with Dean Harris to hold off on his own career by a day in order to bring Sergei to school himself, on the first day.

It was vital, in his estimation that Sergei learn to be comfortable in his place of education in order to glean as much as he could from the experience. The change in their financial and familial circumstances forced Isaac to realize that Sergei needed normal interactions with children his own age. His son needed friends and time to play.

Isaac had also rejected the idea of a private school, even though Stiles had done quite a bit of research into the local Catholic school. Isaac didn’t feel as though a school of such rigid punishments would be appropriate for Sergei at the current moment they found themselves in. Sergei needed to see happiness and Isaac was willing to sacrifice a better education to achieve that.

“There’s no playground, papa.” Sergei remarked as they approached the front doors.

“It’s in the back, son.” Isaac replied with a smile.

The inside of the school was what Isaac had expected, though nothing had prepared him for the feeling of nostalgia that welled up in him when the lingering scent of public school meals hit him. School had always been something of an escape for Isaac. Even lacking in a great number of friends, he had always found himself taking refuge in the walls of any building that lacked his father.

Colorful drawings of unknown subject matter were pasted on the walls, and the banners welcoming students back were already up. The smiling faces of cartoon suns and surfers beckoned the children in, no doubt attempting to capitalize on the joys of summer.

“This is nice, huh, Sergei?” Isaac asked, looking down at his son.

Sergei made a face at the banner, before shrugging.

“Maybe.” He said. “I think it smells kind of funny.”

Isaac chuckled at the difference between himself and his son, before taking his hand as well, and leading him towards the administrative offices.

“Isaac Lahey?” A kind faced woman with jet black hair asked as she approached them.

Isaac recognized her at once, and let out a laugh as he embraced an old acquaintance.

“Kira? Is that you?” He asked, feeling far more excited than he would have before the death of Liam.

“Who else would it be?” She asked, pulling back to take in their group. Sergei gave her a shy smile, but kept his hand firmly in Jordan’s.

“Son, vydrachka, this is an old friend of mine, Kira. I went to school with her, growing up.”

“Nice to meet you. I heard a rumor that you and your son were in town, but I figured I would have seen you, before now.” Kira said, awkwardly shaking

hands with Jordan, who had to offer his left.

“Were you nice to my papa?” Sergei asked with a glare, which made Isaac blush.

“Sergei, you need to be nice.”

Kira waved it away, though. “I tried to be nice to your papa. I can’t recall that I was ever mean.” She said with a smile.

“Never.” Isaac confirmed.

After receiving Isaac’s blessing, Sergei extended his free hand, and shook with Kira, who was smiling warmly at him.

“You guys know that school isn’t for another week, right?”

“Yes, I thought...We recently had a bit of trouble in our lives, and as a result, Sergei is very nervous about going to school. I thought it would be nice for him to see the building and maybe meet his teacher, but the principal made no promises.” Isaac explained.

“And what grade are you entering?” Kira asked Sergei.

“Second.” Sergei whispered.

Kira let out a bark of laughter and clapped her hands together. “Well, that’s marvelous, because I know for a fact that the second grade teacher is here.” She said.

“Really? Where is he?” Jordan asked.

“*She* is standing right in front of you.” Kira said, with a smirk, crossing her arms.

“You’re my teacher?” Sergei asked, looking up at her.

“Yep, and in that respect, it’s even more of a pleasure meeting you.”

Isaac had no choice but to accept public school for his son, but he felt better that Sergei’s teacher was Kira Yukimura. There was a sense of comfort and security at the idea of his son going to school under the tutelage of someone that Isaac

had known growing up. As Kira led them to her classroom, Isaac listened closely to her as she switched to a more professional tone, explaining her approach to teaching and children.

“I’m in full understanding of the standardized way that students learn, but I’m also a big fan of allowing them to pursue their own strengths, while also helping them shore up their weaknesses, as well.”

“You make sure they’re prepared for the next grade, though, right?” Jordan asked, eliciting a pleasurable feeling in Isaac. Jordan taking such an interest was both inspiring and oddly arousing.

“Absolutely. Maybe even a little more, if we’re lucky. We cover the basics of math, social studies, spelling, and so on, but I find that if each child tries to find their own likes and dislikes, it prepares them better for the future.” She explained.

“That’s good, isn’t it, son?” Isaac asked.

Sergei certainly seemed more interested in the idea seeing that Isaac wasn’t afraid.

“Yeah. Does that mean that we can read Russian books?” He asked.

Kira let out a laugh. “Well, I don’t know if we’ll get to Trotsky this year. Do you speak Russian?”

“Da.” Sergei said, proudly.

“Well, that’s something we can focus on. I am Korean and Japanese, and I like to share parts of my culture with the class. It will be interesting if you would let us share in Russian culture, too.”

Sergei’s eyes lit up at those words. “That’s what my papa’s doing!” He said, excitedly, as though no child could hope for more than to emulate their father.

“I’m teaching at the college, this semester.” Isaac explained.

“Well, that’s awesome, Isaac, you should have said that you were a fellow educator!”

“I’m really not...I just...”

“He’s just being modest.” Jordan cut in. “He’s going to be awesome.”

“Best teacher ever!” Sergei agreed, making Isaac blush.

They sat and discussed more of how Sergei’s education would go, and before Isaac could even ask, Kira told him that it was very common for parents to arrive with their children on the first day, easing another tension in Isaac’s chest.

“We’re going to have so much fun, Sergei, I can’t wait until class starts.” Kira said, waving them off in the direction of the playground.

“Me neither, Ms. Kira.” Sergei said, his attitude much improved. It was a sign that Isaac took as a good omen. If Sergei was willing to give his trust, it meant his instincts were correct, which was an assurance that he desperately needed.

They spent the rest of that day playing on the playground. Isaac felt well enough to climb the monkey bars with his son, and build extremely crude sandcastles for Sergei to destroy.

“How are you feeling about this?” Jordan asked, in between one of their activities, while Sergei began a campaign against the mounds of dirt Isaac had set up.

“Better than I did when we got here.” Isaac admitted. “But worse than if I was homeschooling him or something.”

“Isaac, you know he needs to be out here, playing with-.”

“I know, I know.” Isaac said. “And he’s going to, but you can’t make me feel good about it.”

“Don’t challenge me on that.” Jordan said in a husky voice, running a finger over the front of Isaac’s jeans.

Isaac pecked him on the cheek, before letting out a sigh.

“I don’t know. I think...logically, I’m so excited for him. Kira’s an amazing woman, and the chance for Sergei to make new friends is one that I shouldn’t

balk at, but...there's a part of me that's still broken, that sees all of this as a trap that could bring him harm."

"We...took care of the man who wanted to hurt him, though." Jordan said, wrapping an arm around Isaac while they watched Sergei kick dirt around.

"I know, and I'm not saying that that's not a good thing, but it's not like Liam was the only sick man in the universe."

"I get it. It's a fatherly protection, and I feel it, too, but...I don't know, for me, it seems that keeping them too sheltered is just as bad. Like...he'll miss out on more. Because, I can do it, Isaac. If you wanted, I could homeschool him, never leave his side, but deep down, I think we want something else for him."

"Something more." Isaac said, nodding. "But thank you."

"Anything for you, babe. Anything at all."

"Even a night of passionate cuddling and making out, if I can convince Sergei to stay in his room?"

"Maybe." Jordan said. "If you can't, you know I don't mind, and besides, it's kind of nice cuddling with both of you."

Isaac snorted. "He kicked you in the balls last night, vydrachka."

Jordan shrugged. "Better to be kicked in the balls by accident by your son than to be in a cold bed alone."

"You should turn that into a bumper sticker." Isaac remarked, though he found the sentiment very touching.

"I love you, Isaac." Jordan said, pressing a nose to the side of his head. "I just...I never want you to forget, even for a moment how much I love you."

"I can't and I won't, because I love you, too."

"And I want to thank you for giving me a son." Jordan continued. "Because this, right here, is what my life was for."

“Well, the labor was a pain, but you’re most definitely welcome.” Isaac said, with a laugh.

“Papa, you’re supposed to be building more castles.” Sergei whined from across the sandbox.

“Silly me.” Isaac said, leaning forward to build some more for his son.

“I was actually going somewhere with that.” Jordan said, leaning forward as well. “I wanted to ask you if we could stay with Stiles and Derek instead of getting our own place.”

“That’s...why?”

“Stability and family.” Jordan said, simply. “You can’t deny that it would be good for Sergei, and you as well.”

“What brought this up?” Isaac asked.

“Well, when we were driving here, I thought about asking you to move in with me, but then I remembered how well the five of us work together. When I talked to Derek and Stiles about it, they seemed to agree, but Stiles told me that you were only there to get back on your feet. Even when you’re standing tall, it can be bad to move, though.”

“So, you’re telling me that for stability’s sake, you’re willing to stay in a house with two others?”

“Isaac, it’s you. I’m willing to do anything that might be good for you.” Jordan said with a grin.

Notes for the Chapter:

I've been very bust writing up political essays, and I lose track of time, so please, forgive me?

75. First Friends

Summary for the Chapter:

Isaac and Jordan take Sergei to his first day of school.

Isaac

The day that Sergei was due to go to school, Isaac woke up with feeling that he was truly normal. It had taken a while to reach that point, but with Jordan's arm across his chest, and the prospect of sending his son into public, he felt as though he was living a life much like every other parent in Beacon Hills must have been living. After all, worrying about his son's safety at school was something that wasn't so unusual that it isolated him the way that his fear of Liam had.

"Big day." Jordan said, his fingers popping as he stretched them out on Isaac's chest.

"But a *normal* big day, which to me, is perfect. You're...you're coming with us, right?"

"Yes, Isaac, as I've promised you many times, I am coming with you to take our son to his first day of school." Jordan said with a chuckle.

"See, this is what I'm talking about. Two fathers, a son, and some bagged lunches, heading out to go to school."

"And then tomorrow, we'll be doing the same thing for you."

"Ugh, don't remind me. I'm so scared, vydrachka."

"Babe, I'll be there, and I won't let anything-."

"It's not that, Jordan. I'm not scared of being kidnapped. I'm scared because I've never done this, before. I don't know how to teach kids."

"Except that you do, babe." Jordan said, sitting up. "What do you think Sergei is, the random amalgamation of his genes without any input from you? Sergei is the most precious child that I've ever known, and *you* did that. Through teaching

and loving him, through your wisdom and grace. If you give even a tenth of that to these kids, they'll be just fine."

Isaac felt his throat tighten as he processed Jordan's words. It had been exactly the type of thing that he had expected Jordan to say, but the gravity of the words hit him more than he could have ever could have thought.

"That's...thank you." He whispered, reaching down to take Jordan's hand.

"It's the truth, babe. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, but as far as I'm concerned, education will be the former for you."

"We'll find out, tomorrow, won't we?"

"Together." Jordan agreed, nodding. He placed a kiss on Isaac's cheek, before letting out a moan. "I will say that I'm going to miss these lazy days where we could just lay here all day, if we want."

"Normal." Isaac reminded him.

"Then let's go prepare a normal lunch for our normal son." Jordan said with a wink, getting out of bed.

"Papa, what if they don't like me?" Sergei asked as they pulled up to the school. There were children milling around, lunchboxes in hand, and backpacks in tow. Like Sergei, many of them were there with their parents, some of them with looks of displeasure, but other excitedly pointing things out to the men and women who held their hands.

"Sergei, the world is full of mean people, but there's also very kind one, like you." Jordan said. "I'm betting that you're going to make a lot of friends, though, because you're an amazing kid."

"If you're right, can I bring them over to the house?"

"Of course." Isaac replied.

Sergei clutched his new, Adventure Time backpack to his chest while he seemingly pondered on the idea.

“What if I don’t make any friends?” He asked, quietly. “Can I quit school and stay at home with you two?”

“Sergei, school is important, and you can’t leave. Just...be yourself, and I guarantee that you’ll find some kindred spirits.” Isaac explained. “Chicago was...the school was different, the people were different, and so were we. You... You and I have a bond, and that’s great, but it also makes you nervous about interacting with other people. You were always so focused on coming home to me, because we were all we had in the world. We’ve had to grow, though. We moved, we found new family in your dyadi and Jordan, we’ve made friends with people my age, and now it’s time for you to do the same. Things are so much different now, and even though you’re afraid, I’m so excited for what this new world holds for you. You’re going to make friends, son, I just know it.”

Sergei took Isaac’s hand. “Okay, papa, let’s go.”

There had been a recent time when Isaac would have considered the noise and bustling of the school to be too much for him, but knowing what he was there for, and having Jordan by his side was enough to power him through it.

Of course, going to a public elementary school with another man’s hand in his meant that the trio got their fair share of dirty looks, but Isaac didn’t care. There was nothing to be done about rude people, and he couldn’t find the negative energy to want to do something even if he could. He was simply too excited about Henry and his life to let such things bother him.

“Excuse me?” A small voice snapped Isaac from his thoughts and made him turn around to find a small child around Henry’s age with brilliant, green eyes contrasted by his olive skin staring at them. It took a moment for Isaac to realize that the boy was speaking to Sergei, before he gave his son a small push towards the boy.

“I like your backpack.” He said. “Did your dad buy it for you?”

Sergei nodded, shyly. “My dads let me pick out anything I want, and I like Adventure Time.”

“Me, too. My brother says it’s for babies, but he’s a butt, anyway.”

Isaac stayed his tongue, even though he had raised Sergei not to use language

like the boy was using. He knew that he could not always be a monitor for what his son heard, though.

Sergei let out a chuckle and held out a hand. “My name is Sergei.”

“I’m Ryan.”

Isaac thanked God that his words had proven true so quickly. As Sergei and Ryan talked a little about the types of shows they liked, he turned to Jordan to find them watching fondly, as well.

It was the type of day that Isaac had dreamed of. Due to the presence of so many parents, Kira felt that having everyone introduce themselves was a prudent course of action. Ryan, who was also in the same class was a Syrian refugee, giving a few lines in Arabic, which Sergei had mimicked with his Russian. Isaac noticed that the two found this development to be very interesting, with them whispering and giggling during the other introductions.

Kira had then sent the students out to recess, while asking the parents to stay behind, something that Isaac was able to do with Jordan’s hand in his, and he was glad that he did when Sergei came back with Ryan and two other children following him, all of them talking and laughing.

“Papa, this is Clarice and Terrance, they both like Pokémon and Power Rangers and Adventure Time, too, and Terrance also has two daddies.”

“Wow! That’s pretty awesome, son.” Isaac replied, hesitating about asking whether or not Sergei had been safe, but Jordan took that role upon himself.

“Did anything happen out there?”

“We played, but nothing bad, papa.” Sergei promised, earning him a smile from both Jordan and Isaac.

“Who’s your young friend, Terrance?”

Isaac jumped when he looked up at the deep voice, but not out of sheer fear, but rather surprise at the size of the man. Terrance’s first father was not only rather tall, but very muscular. Isaac felt something of the stirrings of primal attraction, once he got over the shock of the man’s size, but found himself preferring his

own fiancé's body.

"I'm Isaac and this is my fiancé, Jordan. We're the fathers of Sergei, who your son seems to have taken a shine to." Isaac said, holding out his hand. It was a bold move for himself, but it was rewarded when the man's grip was soft. Still, Isaac noticed Jordan sidled his way forward to shake the man's hand as well in a protective gesture.

"Nice to meet you both, I'm Andrew, and my husband, Collin, is around here, somewhere."

"Papa, can we go back to our desks?" Sergei asked, moving to his desk with his new friends when Isaac nodded.

"It's really great to see Terrance hanging out with other kids. Collin and I have been a little nervous about switching him to public school." Andrew said, his eyes on his son as he spoke.

"Switched him from where?" Isaac asked, trying to maintain his own new attitude in regards to people.

"Collin and I were homeschooling him. I know," he added, seeing Jordan's raised eyebrow, "but believe it or not, homeschooling isn't just for religious fanatics in the South, we did it because we didn't want to...subject him to the ridicule that comes with having gay parents."

"We haven't had that many problems." Jordan said.

"Exactly. I suppose I was being a little overprotective."

"I know all about that." Isaac said with a chuckle. "It's refreshing to know that I'm not the only one."

"Ah, there's my moon and stars." Andrew said, pointing to a man who was nearly the exact opposite of Andrew himself. Colling was an extremely skinny man who barely came up to Isaac's chest when he came over.

Making introductions was normal, but Isaac found himself wondering if he and Jordan struck the same image when people saw them. Not their difference in size, but in attitude. Isaac was still nervous, shy, and more focused on his son

than anything else, while Jordan was bold, charismatic, and funny. Jordan's hand was steadfast in his own, and Isaac had no doubts that they belonged together, but it made him curious about how he seemed to other people. He didn't mind being seen as the charge to Jordan's protector role, but he hoped that people saw him as his own person. It would be crucial when he had a class sitting before him.

Isaac ended up getting Andrew's number so that Sergei, Terrence, Clarice, and Ryan could stay in touch and continue building a friendship, something that Sergei was enthused to no end about.

"Thank you for making me come, papa." He said as they piled in the car to head home, as though school wasn't a requirement for all children.

"You're welcome, son, what did I tell you?"

"That I'd make friends if I was myself, and you were right, but I was scared."

"I was scared, too, but we learned why trying is important, didn't we?"

Sergei nodded, excitedly. "I can't wait for tomorrow."

Isaac supposed that it was the culmination of everything he was supposed to have done in his life up to that point. Having his son actually look forward to the following day after everything that had happened to them was all he could have ever wanted. All he had to do was get himself to the same level.

76. Closings

Isaac

Isaac stood outside of his classroom, having had to check the number several times. He didn't feel like it would be prudent for him to walk into the wrong classroom as his way of starting the semester.

"Are you doing alright, babe?" Jordan asked, squeezing his arm.

Isaac nodded, even though he was nervous. It was too late for him to back out, and a part of him didn't want to. The only problem he was facing was the nasty voice, which sounded oddly like Liam, telling him that he would fail.

The room fell silent as Isaac entered, followed by Jordan. Isaac looked up to see the desks arranged with roughly twenty-five students, which he supposed was because of his inexperience. Harris had told him that there were a bunch of students who were eager to learn Russian, but as far as Isaac was aware, maybe twenty-five students was a lot for a town like Beacon Hills.

"Uh...Privet (hello), my name is Isaac Lahey, and I'll be your professor this semester." Isaac said, wiping his sweaty palms on his jeans. Isaac took a deep breath and continued. "This is...my fiancé, Jordan, he'll be sitting in on some of our classes with us."

Right away, a hand shot up in the air, and Isaac pointing to the young man.

"Isn't Mr. Parrish the deputy?"

"Yeah, as a matter of fact, he is."

"Does...Are we in danger?" He asked, looking a little uncomfortable.

"No!" Isaac said, quickly. "I mean...no. He's here..." Isaac paused and sighed, looking at Jordan who shrugged, leaving the decision up to Isaac.

"Okay, well, the truth is, I had some problems recently with someone who was interested in me, even though I wasn't into it, and to be honest, I don't feel entirely safe. You see..." Isaac leaned against the desk and began to explain the

parts of his story that he felt comfortable sharing. He omitted bits such as the rape and the fact that Jordan blew Liam's brains out, but he found that explaining the story removed some of the poison of the ordeal, and by the end of it, he felt a little better. He had shown his students a bit of soul, and it was up to them to accept or reject him.

"I know that you were all excited to learn Russian this semester, though, so I'm trying to stick it out." Isaac finished, looking out at the student's faces.

Another hand went up and Isaac pointed, wondering if he was about to be laughed at or talked down to, but instead the woman smiled warmly at him.

"My husband has PTSD, and he's still not comfortable leaving the house, I think it's very brave of you to come out so soon after it happened, especially with your son in school."

There were nods and murmurs of agreement from the class, stinging Isaac's eyes and making him smile.

"Spasibo (Thank you). That...that means a lot to me." Isaac said. "I...I really hope that you all learn something this semester, and I'm excited that I'm the one who gets to teach you."

Isaac turned to the board with a smile and began to write down the words that he had already used in Cyrillic.

"So, looking at this board, who can tell me one of the first and most noticeable differences between Russian and English?"

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"So, how did it go, what did you teach, what did they say?" Stiles began his bombardment of questions the moment Isaac walked through the door, Sergei balanced on his hip. Stiles was sitting on the couch, bouncing with his excitement.

"Aren't you supposed to be in class, still?" Isaac asked, setting Sergei down. His son ran into the kitchen and immediately began searching for a snack.

"Don't deflect, come on, we're celebrating! Sergei's in school, you're teaching,

and I have a party planned for tonight, unless something went wrong.”

“Well, call the stripper, I guess.” Isaac said, his eyes drifting to Sergei to make sure that he was out of earshot. “It was amazing.”

Stiles let out a squeal and stood up to embrace Isaac. “I knew it would go well, I mean you’re just...but still, I know kids can be fickle.”

“No. They were...I explained why Jordan was there, and they were very welcoming and understanding. It was amazing, honestly. I mean, they didn’t know me, they didn’t have to be kind, but they were. I think I’m going to like this class.”

“And the class really likes you, babe.” Jordan said, wrapping his arms around Isaac from behind, and kissing his neck.

“So, they don’t mind you being there, J-Man?” Stiles asked, chuckling when Jordan let out a sigh.

“Not that they really have a choice in the matter, but nyet. Besides, it will be helpful to be there, learning Russian, as well.”

“I hadn’t even considered that aspect of it.” Isaac said with a chuckle.

“I’m really happy that everything went well for you, if not a little jealous. I was a spaz on my first day, and the students never let me forget it.”

“Stiles...you’re kind of a spaz, own it.” Isaac said with a chuckle.

“Today’s not about me or my spaziness, it’s about you and your son getting acclimated to a *normal* life, something that I know you’ve been dreaming of since you got here.”

“Longer than that, even.” Isaac admitted, nodding. “But, I’d like to change the reason to having a family. A fiancé, and two brothers.” Isaac said, clapping a hand on Stiles’ shoulder.

“And a son, papa.” Sergei said, coming into the living room with a packet of Gushers.

“And the best son in the world.” Isaac agreed, picking him up, and eating the candy that Sergei offered him.

“If we’re having a party, does that mean that I can stay up late?” Sergei asked, pulling his softest expression from his arsenal to ask.

“Not too late, son, you have school in the morning.” Jordan said, looking to Isaac for approval.

Isaac nodded. “You can stay up a little later than normal, but Jordan’s right, you’ve got to get your rest for school.”

“Okay. We’re learning about the ocean tomorrow, and the teacher wants my help in naming the animals in Russian.”

Sergei was excited about going to school on his own, which was something that Isaac couldn’t help but smile at. It was certainly a day to celebrate, and as Isaac brought his son into the kitchen to help him with his homework, he realized that he would never have need to ask for anything ever again.

The party that night was a simple affair, with everyone that Isaac had grown up with, and whom Sergei had come to love sitting around the kitchen, munching on pizza slices and talking small. Everyone had words of congratulations for them, everyone was happy, and Isaac found himself transfixed in the moment, captivated by the simplicity that life could offer. A small town, a few friends, a humble meal of dough, sauce, and cheese, and a son who was no longer afraid of the world, but had a place in it.

That night, once the goodbyes had been said, and Sergei had been tucked in to sleep, Isaac led Jordan to their bedroom by the hand. By the light of the candles that Isaac had placed, they made gentle love, changing positions many times, though Isaac hardly noticed. He didn’t hurt, he wasn’t afraid, and he felt connected to Jordan on a level that he had never felt before.

Fate had it that Isaac ended up riding Jordan’s cock when they finally came in tandem, panting and slick with sweat, but Isaac didn’t mind. He pressed his face to Jordan’s chest and let out a heady chuckle, while he took in the scent, the feeling, the perfection that was Jordan Parrish.

“I love you, babe.” Jordan breathed into his hair, his voice hoarse from exertion.

“I love you, too, vydrachka.” Isaac replied, his breath shaky. “We did it. It took me longer than I thought it would, but we finally...”

“It was perfect, Isaac, well worth the wait, even if we didn’t get here for another ten years.”

“And just think, you’ll have to share with me for the rest of our lives.” Isaac said, teasingly.

“That might be the best news that I’ve ever heard, but I have to admit that it might be even better in the sun, out of the shadows. Maybe even on the beach in Cancun or Italy.”

“Are you hinting at our honeymoon?”

“Maybe a little. I was thinking of it more like a family vacation.”

“Sergei’s presence, while necessary, will hinder any sex on the beach.” Isaac argued.

“And that’s the beauty of having a family. We get to...argue about small things, try to hide the fact that we’re being intimate together, and travel around the world with our son, Isaac. This is life, babe. Welcome to it.”

Notes for the Chapter:

So, I've spent this entire time typing this, trying to make the last chapter perfect, and this is what I came up with. I understand if you guys don't like it, but I thought that it was a good note to end on.

Author's Note:

So, for those who aren't reading Beneath the Fangs and Claws, I am currently penning two fics at once, this is the second of those.